Football Premiership: Liverpool 4 Chelsea 2

Hat-trick Berger is king of the Kop

David Lacey

LIVERPOOL's smouldering sense of injustice, allied to their opponents' continuing lack of discipline, last Sunday helped them remind those above them in the table that their challenge may not be so distant after all. As it is, a 4-2 victory over Chelsea, reversing last season's FA Cup defeat, has restored Roy Evans's team to the top half-dozen.

Patrik Berger, apart from scoring his first hat-trick for Liverpool, produced an all-round performance of pace, perception and prodigious effort which gave Evans's side the impact which, for all their patience and pretty passing patterns, this team quite often lack. For all Steve McManaman's angled dashes past defenders, the pony-tailed Czech was the central figure in this match.

For the third time this season Chelsea finished with 10 men because of a red card and for the second time the player to go was a Frenchman. With Frank Leboeuf suspended after his sending-off against Arsenal a fortnight earlier, Bernard Lambourde, his replacement in the middle of the defence, was booked by David Elleray for fouling Karlheinz Riedle on the quarter-hour and then dismissed for bringing down McManaman 10 minutes later.

In the subsequent reorganisation, which saw Ruud Gullit bring himself on for Gianfranco Zola with the score at 1-1, whatever hope Chelsea might have had of winning at Anfield in the league for only the second time in 61 years all but disappeared. They continued to pass the ball well but their attack had lost its principal cutting edge.

Gullit's reason for the sacrifice of Zola, his most likely match-winner even when a man short, was that the Italian was a short man, too short in fact to hold the ball up as a lone striker. Yet the number of scoring opportunities Chelsea created during the last 25 minutes after they had gone 4-1 down suggested that Zola should have stayed on longer.

The sending-off of Lambourde was not the most controversial incident in a match which at times seethed with argument, mirroring Chelsea's 2-2 draw with Manchester United at Old Trafford.

Chelsea, for instance, had cause to feel hard done by five minutes before half-time when they were refused a penalty after Rob Jones appeared to barge into Gustavo Poyet from behind in full view of the Kop.

The Kop, however, was not letting on, and, in any case, had long since decided that the referee owed them some compensation. Certainly the goal with which Chelsea drew level barely two minutes after falling behind was a worthy addition to the lengthening list of refereeing aberrations.



Czech mate . . . Berger scores his third goal despite the attentions of Le Saux PHOTO: MICHAEL STEELE

After a tentative start Liverpool nearly took the lead on 15 minutes when Stig Bjornebye's centre from the left found Riedle rising above everyone at the far post to produce a firm header which Ed De Goey managed to tip over the bar. Four minutes later, the awkward bounce of a long ball from Paul Ince deceived Graeme Le Saux, and Berger lobbed De Goey with a coolness that was soon forgotten amid the white Anfield anger that followed.

As Poyet fed the ball through to Zola, who was on-side, Hughes, running back from an offside position, appeared to foul Bjorn Kvarme when the Norwegian tried to get across to intercept the danger. Elleray glanced at his linesman for offside but the flag stayed down, no free-kick was given and Zola, keeping his balance beautifully after David James had half-blocked him, ran the ball into an empty net as the crowd erupted.

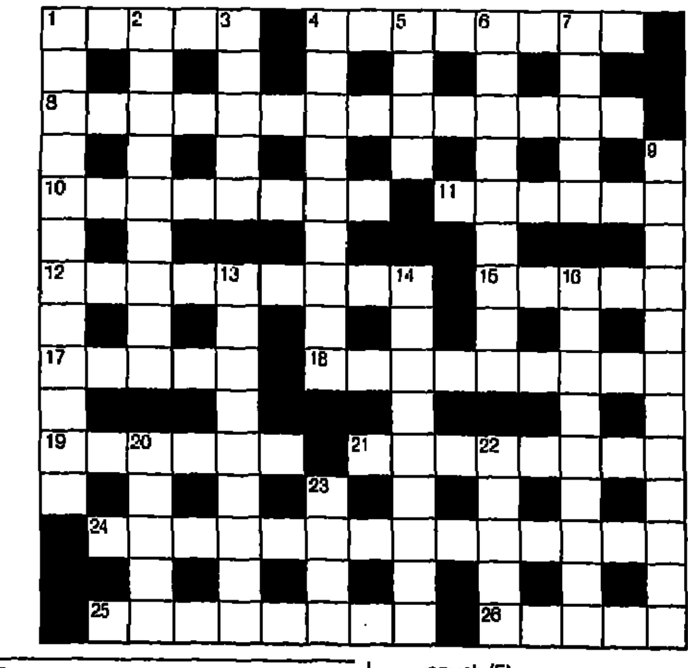
Eleven minutes before half-time Bjornebye exchanged passes with McManaman before crossing low from the left-hand byline for Berger's right foot, for once, to complete the best move of the afternoon.

Three minutes before the hour, a pass from McManaman caught Chelsea flat as pancakes at the back and Berger rounded De Goey to score Liverpool's third. Six minutes later Robbie Fowler added a fourth from Berger's return pass.

The ease with which Chelsea, having added Tore Andre Flo to their attack, then began to get behind Liverpool's defence sugge... a rather tighter result had they ... tained a full complement of pla... Gullit should have scored but ... over and eventually Poyet alle... Chelsea's gloom with a penalty ... Flo had been brought down ... Jason McAteer, who replaced J... at half-time.

The win took Liverpool up ... places, from 11th to sixth, ... they are now a point be... Chelsea. At times in this match ... field saw signs of the things ... need to happen if Liverpool's ch... pionship aspirations are to be ... ously renewed. Judgment, howe... should wait until they start pu... results together, and prefer... against teams with 11 men.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

1 Shoe for wrecking boats? (5)
4 Letter set, maybe Roman, if so with high-bridged nose? (8)
8, 11 Plea against secrecy to one flimsy monarch: Spooner said she would gamble on the antique (1,5,2,6,2,4)
10 Irishman about to declare you can't rely on him? (8)
11 See 8
12 Coinage giving rise to a single moo (9)
15 Health is recommended to suit (5)
17 Parts of plants that stick to a pouch (5)
18 Artist inversely pays a call on descendants? (4-5)
19 Drawing goes to payment for work (6)
21 Reduce scope of agreement (8)
24 Battle over Derwent (or Welland?) (or football fans?) (8,6)
25 Rio, an ancient city — poetically it was Rome (8)
26 Prison is the fashion, they say (5)

Down

1 Dizzy city featuring trunks (8-4)
2 Conduct bachelor: he's taken up a sixth of us (9)
3 A number or a voice, of course (5)
4 Announcer or writer con moto (4,5)
5 Sign here after job? (4)
6 Investigator about to drop on British border (6-3)
7 Instrument marred by Italian boy? (5)
9 Literary dame to amend this — wrongly — rightly! (5,7)
13 Protestant's limits in Muslim state (9)
14 Queen Mother, first peer first, buying by 5 (4,5)
16 Royal dwarf, losing heart, harried in unreasonable manner (9)
20 Most of us shine like diamond's (5)
22, 23 Wader to seek expedient (9)

Last week's solution

D	E	M	I	S	E	M	I	Q	U	A	V	E	R	■
B	■	E	■	I	■	I	■	U	■	D	■	X	■	G
C	H	A	R	M	E	R	■	I	N	D	I	T	E	R
L	■	N	■	I	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	R	■	E
I	D	E	A	L	■	N	O	T	O	R	I	E	T	Y
N	■	S	■	A	■	D	■	E	■	■	■	M	■	H
E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	■	C	R	E	D	O
A	■	■	■	L	■	■	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	U
N	O	O	K	Y	■	R	O	S	C	O	M	M	O	N
D	■	R	■	■	■	A	■	T	■	S	■	A	■	D
F	R	E	N	C	H	I	F	Y	■	S	P	E	A	R
A	■	G	■	H	■	M	■	L	■	F	■	S	■	A
L	E	A	K	A	G	E	■	I	D	I	O	T	I	C
L	■	N	■	I	■	N	■	S	■	R	■	R	■	E
■	G	O	I	N	G	T	O	T	H	E	D	O	G	S

Golf German Masters

Langer in awesome form

Michael Britten in Berlin

BERNHARD LANGER added another chapter to his illustrious record last Sunday when he strode unchallenged to his fourth victory of the season.

He won the German Masters by six strokes after a record-breaking third round of 60 had spreadeagled the field at the Motzener See club here and left the $200,000 top prize at his mercy. Langer duly took it after a final round of 70 for a 21-under-par total of 267, relegating Colin Montgomerie to runner-up, with Thomas Bjorn third. Two more members of Europe's victorious Ryder Cup team, José Maria Olazábal and Costantino Rocca, were joint fourth with Sweden's Patrik Sjoland on 276.

This was the third time Langer had won a European Tour event the week after a Ryder Cup. In 1991, he demonstrated his resilience after his agonising miss on the last green at Kiawah Island by winning this title in Stuttgart. Two years ago, after the European triumph at Oak Hill, he took the European Open at Ireland's K club, and now he has won again, after achieving the victory over Brad Faxon that ensured Europe retained the trophy.

"I have no special secret," he said after celebrating his 10th European Tour success on h... soil. "I forget what is behind ... and focus on what is ahead. Y... cannot live in the past."

That is easier said than done as his Ryder colleagues Montgomerie and Bjorn found after Langer had put himself be... yond reach with his career-be... third round. He recorded 11 birdies and an eagle in becom... the eighth player to score 60 i... Europe. Had he not three-put... the 6th and seen a three-foot birdie putt spin out of the 14... hole, he would have broken th... barrier.

Langer had only 23 putts i... establishing a seven-shot lead for the final round. As Montgomerie remarked: "Fro... then on we all became incide... to the plot."

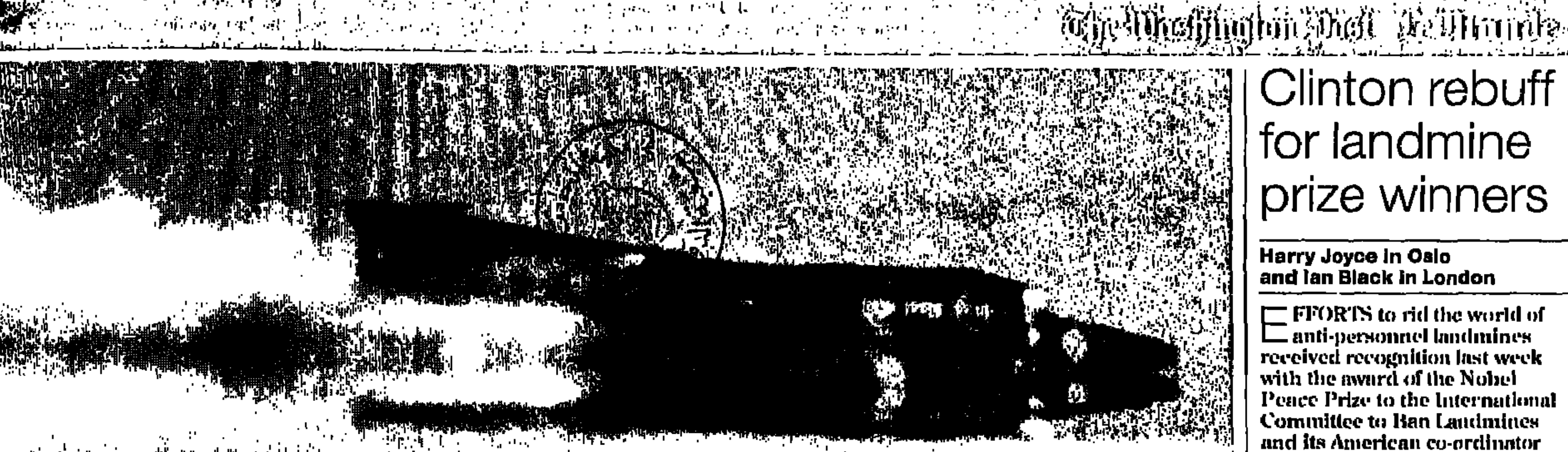
When Langer resumed the ... round in the same vein, almo... holing his first wedge shot and ... first bunker recovery and ... ing the simplest of birdies at ... opening two holes, only the m... gin of victory was in doubt.

Neither Montgomerie nor Olazábal could make any im... pression and, when the Scot dumped his pitch into the p... at the 9th and began to ha... photographers in his frustr... he was not only in danger of ... ing second place — worth m... than $135,000 — but also hi... leadership of the money li...

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The Guardian Weekly

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Noble prize . . . Thrust SSC, driven by RAF pilot Andy Green, goes supersonic in the Nevada desert on Monday, the first craft to break the sound barrier on land. But the triumph of Richard Noble's British team — one day before the 50th anniversary of Chuck Yeager's first supersonic flight — failed by one minute to qualify as the world's first official supersonic land speed record PHOTO: GARY CASKEY

Blair jeered after historic handshake

John Mullin in Belfast

AN ANGRY mob pushed and jostled Tony Blair as he arrived at a shopping centre in Protestant east Belfast minutes after his historic meeting with Sinn Fein at Stormont Castle on Monday.

The British prime minister was forced to run for cover as more than 100 protesters abused him with shouts of "traitor" and "bastard". He took refuge in a bank and abandoned plans for a walkabout.

It was the roughest reception Mr Blair has experienced while meeting voters. He later left hurriedly under heavy police guard. His bodyguards struggled to get him back to his car safely.

Some of the crowd waved Union flags and wore rubber gloves. They were furious he had shaken hands with Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, a party regarded as inextricably linked to the IRA.

He was the first British prime minister to meet a Sinn Fein leader since Lloyd George and Michael Collins signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 to formalise the partition of Ireland.

One man wore a clothes peg on his nose. He rushed forward to Mr Blair, shouting "scum" in his face.

One of the protesters, Stephen Clarke, aged 29, a painter, from east Belfast, said: "What did he expect coming here after meeting Adams? That we would welcome him with open arms? It is a disgrace, and it shows he doesn't understand Ulster."

Pauline Gilmour, aged 32, whose boyfriend was shot dead by the IRA 10 years ago, said: "He shakes the hands of murderers and then he has the cheek to come here and smile at people. They have been devastated by murder. People are disgusted at this betrayal."

Her boyfriend, Edward Graham, was a member of the Ulster Unionist party and a law lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast. He was shot on the steps of the law faculty.

Mr Blair had earlier met the participating parties at the all-party talks on Northern Ireland's future at Castle Buildings. He spoke of his optimism for a lasting political settlement.

His meeting with Sinn Fein came last. Like the others, it was behind closed doors. Mr Blair confirmed he had shaken hands with the Sinn Fein delegation, which was led by Mr Adams, MP for West Belfast, and Martin McGuinness, MP for Mid-Ulster.

"I greeted them in the same way as I would greet any human being. I think it's important that we treat everyone as human beings," Mr Blair said. "What matters is that within a few months we have got a ceasefire. We have a commitment to democracy and non-violence, and now we must press on with the task of finding a settlement."

Mr Blair made it clear to Sinn Fein during the 20-minute meeting that it would be kicked out of the talks if the IRA ceasefire broke down again. He also emphasised that any settlement required the backing of a majority of voters in Northern Ireland.

Mr Adams told Mr Blair he wanted him to be the last British prime minister with jurisdiction over Northern Ireland. He repeatedly argued that Irish unity was the only solution. It had been a positive meeting, he said.

Mr Blair now faces the problems of deciding when to meet Mr Adams in front of cameras and when to invite Sinn Fein to Downing Street.

Mr Adams said: "I think we are dealing with a man who certainly recognises this is a historic opportunity. He also recognises that there has to be change."

David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists, shrugged off the handshake. "We feel it is rather sad that the Prime Minister thinks it is necessary. But he will be taking the opportunity to underline to Sinn Fein that these talks are based on peaceful means and the democratic process."

John Hume, leader of the nationalist SDLP, said: "By coming here today, the Prime Minister is demonstrating how high on his agenda this is. His visit strengthens the will of the people for lasting peace and puts pressure on the parties to achieve that."

Meanwhile the Clinton administration has excluded the IRA from its new most wanted list of international terrorist organisations, but warned that a resumption of republican violence in Northern Ireland would lead to a ban on fund-raising and other IRA support activity in the United States. Ulster Unionists accused the administration of making a huge mistake that would return to haunt it.

The list of 30 terrorist organisations was issued last week by the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1996. Under the act, designated terrorist organisations may not raise funds and other support in the US, visas are denied to their representatives and funds in US accounts are frozen. "Our goal is to make the United States fully a 'no support for terrorism' zone," Mrs Albright told reporters. "Our message to anyone who comes into our country intending to raise money for a terrorist organisation is: You risk going to jail."

● Talks on the future of Northern Ireland, which resumed last week, were thrown into disarray when Ray Burke, the Irish foreign minister and leader of his government's delegation at Stormont, announced he was quitting politics.

Mr Burke, aged 54, is embroiled in a row over land re-zoning around his constituency north of Dublin after receiving an unsolicited donation from a builder seven years ago. He has denied any wrongdoing.


Bodyguards try to keep Tony Blair away from protesters in Belfast on Monday. He left under police guard PHOTOGRAPH: WILLIAM CHERRY

Commonwealth call, page 12

Clinton rebuff for landmine prize winners

Harry Joyce in Oslo and Ian Black in London

EFFORTS to rid the world of anti-personnel landmines received recognition last week with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Committee to Ban Landmines and its American co-ordinator Jody Williams.

But amid jubilation about the $1 million prize, praise for the role of Diana, Princess of Wales, and a promise by President Boris Yeltsin that Russia would work for a global ban, the United States insisted it would not join more than 90 other countries in signing the Oslo treaty banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of landmines.

International reaction to the Nobel award was immediate — from landmine victims in Angola to Mr Yeltsin, who declared at a Council of Europe meeting in Strasbourg that Moscow would reverse its former stance and accede to the ban.

Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, called the prize "a victory for every child and mother and all vulnerable societies".

Ms Williams, who launched the ICBL in 1992, criticised the US refusal to drop its insistence on using mines on the Korean peninsula. "I've repeatedly said that Bill Clinton is neither a leader nor a statesman and I'll say it again," she said.

Ms Williams paid tribute to the work of Princess Diana in galvanising the campaign.

Literature prize, page 7
Comment, page 12

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Tilting toward the French at a philosophical level

FAR FROM being novel and iconoclastic, the claim by Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont that French philosophy is "simply a load of old tosh" is in fact the norm in most academic circles in Britain (Is modern French philosophy just a load of pseudo-scientific claptrap?, October 12).

Post-war French philosophy combines the enlightenment faith that reason can construct a plural society with a critical agenda. The phenomena of genocide, ecological catastrophe, mass poverty and starvation, and widespread mental depression among privileged classes, tell us that there is something seriously wrong with modern thought and culture.

French philosophy shows that modern life is largely governed by forces beyond conscious control: it exposes the historical and cultural basis of our beliefs and practices; it explores how the language we use determines what we think; it explores the power relations hidden beneath our use of knowledge; it explores the role of market forces in determining how we live and think; and how even our desires are formed by the culture in which we live.

New Labour, by contrast, seeks merely to adapt to global conditions, not to criticise them. There is a revolution sweeping the public institutions of the UK, embodied as much in the Dearing Report into Higher Education as elsewhere: this is the permeation of management styles of thinking into all aspects of public endeavour. It subordinates all ends to the common goal of economic progress. Consequently, the huge debts laid on students drive them away from the Humanities towards professional courses on the mistaken assumption that this makes them more employable. Our precious culture of humanitarian and critical thinking is being rapidly eroded; the new Dark Ages are nearly upon us.
(Dr) Philip Goodchild,
University College of St Martin,
Lancaster, Lancashire

THERE are, no doubt, good reasons why journalists (in Britain at least) enjoy a pretext for making fun of "thinkers", but if your aim in selectively quoting three French intellectuals is to gloat about their supposed incomprehensibility, then perhaps you might consider quoting too from a work of theoretical physics in order that we can all see how much more comprehensible and enlightening their talk is.

Philosophically speaking, the passages you quote from their book show a self-righteous and moralistic naivety that the objects of their attack have (whatever their faults) helped some of us to recognise all too easily.
(Prof) Geoffrey Bennington,
Falmer, Brighton

ONCE again the Guardian Weekly falls for an anti-intellectual line against the French. There are indeed many people in Britain, including myself, who consider themselves to be "thinkers".

Do you not realise that your readers are increasingly turning towards Continental thinking as a way of gaining deeper insights into questions and constructions of identity, sexuality, race and history than the Anglo-Saxon tradition has provided?

Go to any bookshop and check out the philosophy shelves, bulging with Derrida, Bataille, Baudrillard *et al*. In many forms of contemporary cultural production, the French scene is exerting an enormous influence well beyond the Left Bank.

I would hope to see the Weekly charting these influences through informed articles, instead of resorting to superficial piss-takery. One need only think of Derrida and Deleuze's influences on architecture to see that the philosophy still operates as a highly influential discourse.
Jeremy Weate,
London

Across the sexual divide

FRANCIS Fukuyama's not-so-covert chauvinism fuels the war between the sexes not only by its very existence, but also by provoking equally divisive and destructive responses (Divided loyalties, October 5). Decca Aitkenhead's not-so-covert contempt for 50 per cent of the world's population emerges recurrently with phrases such as "the real problem is men, who feel today that they have been released from the obligation to stay with their wives and particularly with the children they father", "the assumption that men can't help their inadequacies", "the price for men's social and economic failings". Ms Aitkenhead either neglects the fact that not 50 per cent but 100 per cent of the population of the world has inadequacies, social and economic failings, or just assumes that those of women are irrelevant to the issue.

Not that some men don't feel alienated sometimes. Everyone feels alienated if it seems to them that nothing depends on them any more, and that their contribution to the common good, rightly or wrongly, isn't appreciated. But Ms Aitkenhead's apparent presumption that all men just allow themselves to be feckless and inadequate and all they want to do (given half a chance) is inseminate, duck responsibilities and enjoy unwarranted power hardly contributes to the harmony between the sexes and mutual support in solving problems.

If partners from both sexes respect the other's striving for balance and fulfilment, it becomes much easier to accept, even enjoy, the fact that in some contexts the other behaves differently. Changes in the roles of men and women are complex and delicate issues and a little bit of tolerance on both sides would go a long way.
Mark Bossanyi,
Sofia, Bulgaria

Fair share of China's cake

IT IS misleading of Larry Elliott to interpret the World Bank China 2020 report as suggesting that "China has the potential to become the second-richest country in the world by 2020" (A green light that signals stop, not go, September 28). What the report in fact says is that China could become the world's second-largest trading nation, making it "a middle-income country with per capita income equal to those of Argentina, the Republic of Korea and Portugal today". China's projected economic growth is premised on 120 million labourers leaving plots of land that are too small to feed them and taking jobs in the manufacturing and service industries. Rather than seeing these people's potential consumption as a green threat, we should worry about whether they will get a fair slice of China's (let alone the world's) cake. Post-Maoist growth has so far markedly increased income inequality.

The more equitable China's growth, the likelier it is that green and quality of life arguments will be heeded. Initial indicators are not all depressing. More than half of respondents to recent Chinese government surveys in Beijing and Shanghai said development "could be slowed down" to protect the environment. This is not the get-rich-quick attitude that Westerners are quick to ascribe to China, and it provides some grounds for believing the future may not be so bad after all.
Nick Young
Editor, China Development Briefing,
Kunming, Yunnan, China

LARRY ELLIOTT says "the problem is that the entire basis for globalisation is greed". He also quotes Charles Handy's The Hungry Spirit: "We have become the prisoners of the money myth."

To make things worse, the United States' hegemonic capitalism tries to dissimulate greed with the superb "I made it" syndrome.
Marcelo E Aftalión,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

An eye on the leading light

JOHN GRAY (Britain's Tories flirting with self-destruction, September 28) has fallen prey to the fallacy that, by voting Labour in one election, voters see some mythical progressive light and never return to the Tory fold. It is an illusion which has cost the Labour party dear in the past, and it will do so again when the Prime Minister finally becomes convinced by his own rhetoric about forging a "new" Britain and starts listening to false prophets such as Mr Gray.

The scale of the Conservative general election defeat was a function of sleaze, division and incompetence. Mr Gray's knowledge of political history, not to mention some of the early experiences of the present government and the performance of some Labour-run local authorities, should disabuse him of the notion that these problems are confined to any one political party, let alone to the Conservative creed.
Mark Stockwell,
London

I LARGELY agreed with John Gray's analysis of the sociological factors underlying the Conservative party's historic decline. However, could he please explain how some of the Government's recent actions, such as advising the oil companies to sue Greenpeace and authorising MI5 to crack down on benefit fraud, contribute to the "reinvention of liberal Britain"?
Tom Walkinson,
Montpellier, France

IF I hear New Labour utter the word "modern" one more time I am going to become a post-modernist. In the current context, the latter offers a more meaningful discourse.
Charles Woolfson,
Glasgow, Scotland

Briefly

YOUR piece makes it sound as though the Australian prime minister, John Howard, has let go of the tiller (October 5). Not so. The corruption, racism, greed, and aggressive stupidity you touched on are integral parts of his programme. Mr Howard let it be known before the last election that he was a fervent admirer of Margaret Thatcher and George Bush, and then proceeded to raffle this malodorous ideological chook to the nation. The "dimwits" are the electoral majority who bought tickets.
John Hayward,
Weegena, Tasmania, Australia

THE implications of "Watch Those Beans" (September 28) are alarming. Has Monsanto any idea of the long-term effects of Roundup-Ready in the soil and in the external environment? Before there is wide-scale acceptance of crops with genetically engineered resistances to any herbicide, the long-term effects of that herbicide must be established. In the case of Monsanto, the possibility of this happening seems remote, as employees of the company occupy important posts in the United States food and drug administration.
Hugh Daubeny,
Vancouver, Canada

JOHN Richmond's letter in response to the article on privatisation (October 5) seemed to me to strike several nails on their heads. The propaganda on privatisation, most of it government inspired, has been so powerful that in most people's minds only privately operated concerns can be successful and, conversely, public services must be disastrous.
R H Harven,
Perth, Scotland

I COMMEND Paul Brown for his article on bottled water (October 5). He exposes this popular drink packaging for what it is. Tap water is cheaper, just as clean or cleaner, and definitely more friendly to the environment. In some countries where tap water is not clean, the choice is difficult. I acknowledge that in some countries bottled water may be safer, but proper disposal of the plastic containers is essential. In Western countries where tap water is safe, bottled water, besides being a con, is an unnecessary threat to our fragile environment.
Heather Noble,
Launceston, Tasmania, Australia

IT IS hardly a paradox that the French spend less time than the English in preparing their evening meal (September 28). Their main meal is at midday.
G Brotherton,
Ste Jean-de-Losne, France

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Communists back down over budget

NEWS ANALYSIS
Celestine Bohlen in Rome

LAST WEEK Italy's small Communist Refoundation party brought about the collapse of prime minister Romano Prodi's centre-left government, arguing that its tight-fisted, pro-Europe policies were a betrayal of the working classes and a sop to globalised capitalism.

On Monday, the same hardline communists were beating a sheepish retreat. They reopened talks that will probably restore Mr Prodi to power and leave his 1998 budget intact. The only concession expected is a pledge to follow the example of France's Socialist government and explore legislation reducing the legal working week from 39 to 35 hours.

What then was this crisis all about? After 55 governments in five decades, Italians are used to the mini-dramas built into their political system. But this time seemed different, because many Italians were upset at the prospect of losing a governing team — a coalition that ranges from liberal Catholics to ex-communists — that seemed to be doing a good job.

For the leaders of the Communist Refoundation party, bringing down the government was a gamble that may end up as a kamikaze mission. Instead of being hailed as heroes in a struggle to protect Italy's generous pension and health care systems, the party and its leaders were roundly criticised last weekend for being obstructionist, outdated and self-indulgent.

Last Sunday, the party's leader, Fausto Bertinotti, was even booed when he joined a march for world peace in Assisi, the earthquake-stricken pilgrimage site that lies within Italy's "Red triangle".

The same verdict was delivered in an avalanche of political commentary in Italian newspapers. "The Refoundation party made the government fall, but in so doing, it prefigured its own virtual political demise," Edmondo Berselli said in La Stampa of Turin.

Yet even though its leaders' strategy backfired, the party represents a constituency that cannot be ignored, not even by a bruised Mr Prodi, a centrist who heads the first left-leaning government elected in Italy since the second world war.

The backbone of his coalition is the Democratic Party of the Left, the larger, more moderate wing of Italy's once-mighty Communist party. But in the arithmetic of the Italian left, the unrepentant communists in Mr Bertinotti's party of factory workers and radical intellectuals are still needed for consensus.

In Italy's last national elections, in April 1996, the Democratic Party of the Left won 21.1 per cent of the vote, while Communist Refoundation won 8.6 per cent. Together, those numbers add up to the constituency represented by Italy's old Communist party, the largest in western Europe until it split in 1991.

Mr Bertinotti and his supporters have been trying to paint their more moderate former comrades as a party that has forsaken principles for power. Until now, Communist Refoundation has stayed resolutely out of the governing coalition, choosing instead a middle course that allowed it to lend — or withhold — the support of its 34 parliamentary deputies.

Without those votes, Mr Prodi's government was doomed to fall, which is what happened on Thursday last week when Communist Refoundation kept true to its pledge to oppose the government's $2.9 billion cuts in pensions and health care.

But in bringing down the Prodi government, the party found itself up against a consensus in Italy that in recent years has proved stronger than any other: an overwhelming commitment to join Europe when it introduces the euro, its proposed common currency, in 1999. Italy's pro-Europe sentiments have consistently proved to be among the strongest on the Continent, despite the pain caused in recent years by successive belt-tightening budgets.

During his 17 months in office, Mr Prodi, a 57-year-old economics professor and former manager of Italy's largest state-owned holding company, has made joining Europe his overriding goal, and his success could be vouched for by the chorus of regret heard last week from other European leaders.

On Monday night, emerging from a new round of talks with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Mr Prodi — who prides himself on an even temper that is at times almost serene — was again optimistic.

"The country will be able to resume its march toward Europe, and our economy its progress toward recovery," he said, as he predicted an announcement on Tuesday of a new agreement with the Communist Refoundation party.
— New York Times



Homeless survivors of Hurricane Pauline reach for relief supplies being handed out by the Mexican army in Acapulco. Pauline, which hit Mexico's Pacific coast last week, killed more than 200 people, left thousands homeless and hundreds missing PHOTO MATIAS RECART

Bosnia Muslims win revenge

Ian Traynor

THE Muslims of Srebrenica, survivors of the worst single slaughter in Europe since the second world war, have exacted a little revenge on the Serb nationalists who seized their homes by winning the local council election last month.

According to media reports and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe last week, Srebrenica exiles driven from the region towards the end of the Bosnian war in July 1995 voted for Muslim parties who won an absolute majority of local council seats.

A coalition of Muslim parties led by the Democratic Action Party of Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegovic won 25 of the 45 seats in the election on September 13 and 14, while the Serbian nationalist zealots who control the east Bosnian town gained the other 20.

For most of the 42-month conflict, Serb artillery, tanks and troops kept the majority Muslim town isolated under the war's worst siege before pounding it into submission in July two years ago.

While tens of thousands of Muslims were allowed to escape, about 7,000 Muslim men are believed to have been murdered by Serb forces under General Ratko Mladic.

Both Gen Mladic and his political leader, Radovan Karadzic, have been indicted by the war crimes tribunal in The Hague for genocide and crimes against humanity.

Survivors and relatives of the victims are still unable to return to their homes, now occupied by Serbs. It is not clear, however, whether the Muslim poll victory in Srebrenica will make it much easier for the exiled voters to go home.

Other poll results disclosed showed that the main Muslim party had also won in the southern town of Foca, another site of Serb atrocities against Muslims during the war.

In Brcko, the United States administrator on Monday ordered that its now-Serb police force admit Croats and Muslims, in a move to re-establish the multi-ethnic character of the hotly contested town. The decree from Robert Farrand calls for a multi-ethnic police force by the end of the year. It is based on election results, which showed six different parties and coalitions winning seats in city hall, but none with a majority.

Poll setback delivers blow to Milosevic

Karen Coleman in Belgrade

THE options for maintaining control are declining for the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, as political uncertainty continues in Serbia and Montenegro, the republics that make up Yugoslavia.

Mr Milosevic's ruling alliance lost control of the Serbian parliament after elections on September 21. His candidate for the Serbian presidency, Zoran Lilic, also lost to the ultra-nationalist Radical, Vojislav Seselj, in this month's presidential run-off, although a less than 50-per cent turnout made the election invalid. A new election will be held, but the rules are vague and no one is sure when it should occur.

Another Milosevic loyalist, Momir Bulatovic, failed to win an outright victory in Montenegro's presidential election on October 5. He faces a tough battle on Sunday against Milo Djukanovic, a bitter opponent of Mr Milosevic.

The most glaring result from Serbia's elections was the increase in support for the Radicals. Mr Seselj's party doubled its seats in the parliament. Analysts say his promises of a better economy and improvements in the payments of pensions and social benefits appealed more than his politics of nationalist extremism.

Unless the authoritarian Mr Milosevic can manipulate the electoral crisis to suit himself, he faces being edged out of politics.

Three factors are likely to influence Mr Milosevic's fate. One is the formation of the new Serbian government. Mr Milosevic can form a government dependent on the co-operation of either of the two main opposition parties. But he may find himself a hostage to the demands of Mr Seselj and the Radicals or Vuk Draskovic and his Serbian Renewal Movement.

The second factor is Montenegro. If Mr Djukanovic wins the presidency on October 19, Mr Milosevic will be in trouble, with a staunch rival eager to weaken his powers.

The third is Kosovo where ethnic Albanian students have been holding demonstrations to regain access to university buildings in Pristina. The Serbian province's majority population of 2 million ethnic Albanians has been ruled by a tiny number of Serbs.

● The hardline Bosnian Serb leader Momcilo Krajisnik bowed to international pressure for a delay in parliamentary elections due this autumn after meeting Mr Milosevic, who mediated in a dispute between Mr Krajisnik and the Bosnian Serb president, Biljana Plavsic.

The Week

CANADA reinstated visa restrictions on the Czech Republic in an attempt to discourage immigration by Gypsies from that country after more than 1,200 arrived this year, mostly in the last two months, seeking protection as refugees.

THE former head of the FBI's violent crime squad, Michael Kahoe, was jailed for 18 months for trying to conceal damning evidence on a 1992 shoot-out between the "feds" and a white supremacist militiaman in Idaho.

THE US army is to court-martial Sergeant Major Gene Mckinney, the service's top enlisted man, on sexual harassment charges brought against him by six female servicewomen.

WIN TIN, a close ally of the Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been imprisoned by the military regime for the past eight years, has been sent to hospital with serious heart problems, democrat and human-rights groups said.

THE Belgian prime minister, Jean-Luc Dehaene, announced sweeping changes to the police and judicial services following a string of investigative blunders culminating in the country's paedophile scandal.

LAWYERS representing plaintiffs in the trial of Maurice Papon in France for crimes against humanity are to appeal against a judge's decision to allow the former Vichy official to live outside prison during the trial.

BRITAIN defended its right to bring the Lockerbie bomb suspects to trial on its own terms and rejected a Libyan demand that the World Court intervene in arguments over the long-stalled case.

SUSPECTED Muslim rebels massacred up to 54 people near Algeria's main oil and gas hub in the Oran region. Most of the victims had their throats cut and their bodies mutilated.

CHRYSLER, the US's third-largest car maker, was ordered by a South Carolina jury to pay a record $260 million damages to the parents of a six-year-old boy killed in one of its minivans.

MORE than 150,000 Cubans queued in Havana to pay their last respects to the legendary guerrilla Ernesto "Che" Guevara, whose remains were recently returned from Bolivia.

Le Monde, page 13
Washington Post, page 16

JOHN DENVER, a master of melodic folk-pop who had a number of hits in the early 1970s, died when the light plane he was flying crashed in California. He was 53.

Row defused on Queen's India visit

Suzanne Goldenburg in Amritsar

BRITAIN and India on Monday hastened to smooth over an apparent *faux pas* overshadowing a pilgrimage by the Queen to the holiest shrine of the Sikhs and the the scene of one of the worst atrocities of the Raj.

Indian newspapers reported last weekend that the prime minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, had said Britain was a "third rate power" poking its nose in, in response to reported remarks by the UK Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, that Britain had a historic duty to mediate in the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

The two men held a private meeting, described as cordial, and statements were issued by both disowning the reports. Mr Cook made his reported remarks in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, last week, when the Queen also urged the two countries to settle their differences. His statement was read to journalists as a 21-gun salute for the Queen at New Delhi's presidential palace boomed in the background.

In Amritsar, in preparation for the Queen's visit on Tuesday, Punjab police arrested protesters outside the Golden Temple and the walled garden of Jallianwala Bagh, where the Queen laid a wreath to 379 Indians shot by British troops during a demonstration in 1919.

Families of the dead had demanded an official apology, which was not be forthcoming. However, S K Mukherjee, secretary of the trust that looks after the garden, said: "I think when the Queen is having one minute's silence, that is a self-evident apology."

At the temple, freshly whitewashed and bedecked with tinsel, many were waiting in unadulterated delight. When the Queen — unlike ordinary mortals who go barefoot — walked the marble floors in socks provided by the temple, she was cheered by 25 Sikhs who had flown from Britain for the occasion.

Others have tried to link the visit to a review of the entire colonial era. "The visit should open up an opportunity for introspection on the last 150 years," said Rajmohan Singh, a lecturer and the nephew of a Sikh revolutionary who was hanged by the British.

However, displeasure at the Queen's visit was apparent when a few protesters accompanied her first day of engagements.

Both Mr Gujral and Mr Cook made their reported comments in private — Mr Gujral while chatting during a visit to Cairo, and Mr Cook while with the Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif. "I gave no interview, press conference or public statement on Kashmir while in Pakistan," Mr Cook said. "The long and close ties between our two countries are based on mutual respect."

His hour-long meeting with Mr Gujral was described as cordial and constructive. However, the Indian foreign ministry said Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations were not discussed.

That same caution was exercised when Mr Mukherjee showed the Queen around the garden. "They told us: 'You can show each and every thing, but don't show her the bullet marks left behind'," he said.

SA ex-police chief denies orders to kill

Paul Harris in Cape Town

A TOP apartheid-era police official admitted last week that police used words such as "eliminate" and "neutralise" in their commands, but insisted they were not orders to kill.

The former police commissioner, Johan van der Merwe, told a hearing into apartheid-era abuses that the white government's state security council had never issued instructions that resulted in gross human rights violations, but knew they were being carried out.

Mr van der Merwe said he interpreted the words "eliminate" and "neutralise" in an order to mean arrest and detain a suspected anti-apartheid terrorist, but he conceded the orders could easily have been misinterpreted. "Police on the ground . . . in a life-and-death struggle could have seen [the word eliminate] as an order to kill," he said.

Mr van der Merwe was testifying on the third day of special hearings by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate abuses by the security forces of the previous white-minority government and the armed wings of the black liberation movements seeking to overthrow it.

The panel, set up to heal wounds from the apartheid era, has also been holding separate hearings to listen to victims' testimony and to consider applications for amnesty. Mr van der Merwe's application for amnesty will be considered separately.

Earlier, Major Craig Williamson, a police spy for the white government during the 1970s and 1980s, said police officers' overriding concern had been not to get caught doing anything illegal. "The 11th commandment was well known . . . 'Thou shalt not be found out'," he said.

Maj Williamson admitted bombing anti-apartheid activists and said that top police officials had always sought to distance themselves from covert actions.

● Winnie Mandela faced the Commission for the second time on Monday as closed-door hearings resumed on allegations of her involvement in crimes, including eight murders. Last month the commission agreed — at her insistence — to hold open hearings to enable her to defend herself publicly. But it insisted on confidential hearings first.

Rescue workers roll over a stranded pilot whale in northern New Zealand so a sling can be fitted to help it back to sea. More than 40 whales beached themselves on the coast PHOTO: [illegible] MARTIN

US murder suspect holds up Israeli aid

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

UNITED STATES senators have blocked $180 million in aid to Israel as a result of a diplomatic row over the fate of an American schoolboy, aged 17, wanted for the murder and dismemberment of another teenager in Maryland.

Samuel Sheinbein fled to Israel after being charged with the killing of Alfredo Enrique Tello, aged 19, whose badly charred body was found last month without arms and legs in an empty garage. Police found a circular power saw and several cylinders of propane gas near the body.

Mr Sheinbein's lawyers claimed that he qualified as an Israeli citizen because his father had lived there and so could not be extradited under Israeli law.

The US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, recently sent a letter to the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, requesting "maximum co-operation" in repatriating Mr Sheinbein. Mr Netanyahu reportedly replied that the suspect would not be extradited if he could prove Israeli citizenship.

In response, the Senate foreign aid sub-committee has blocked the scheduled transfer of $180 million, which was to have been an advance on 1998's budgeted aid to Israel, the biggest recipient of US foreign assistance. Israeli newspapers reported on Monday that the payment had been held up until next year's budget had been passed in full by Congress.

Congress is also reported to be weighing up several other initiatives to cut up to $1.2 billion in aid if Israel refuses to agree to extradition.

The row over the Maryland teenager has compounded other sources of US-Israeli friction, including the attempted assassination last month of a Palestinian exile in Jordan by Mossad, the Israeli secret service, and Mr Netanyahu's surprise announcement earlier this month that 300 more Jewish homes would be built in the West Bank settlement of Efrat.

Palestinians vehemently oppose the building of houses for Jews on the West Bank and Gaza, which they want to become an independent state.

The prime minister made the announcement without consulting Mrs Albright who had called for a confidence-building "time-out" from settlement building during a visit to Israel only days earlier. She was reported to have been furious and has since refused to take calls from Mr Netanyahu.

Last week, Israeli, Palestinian and US officials had cautiously welcomed a "fresh start" for the Middle East peace process after Mr Netanyahu held a snap summit with the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat.

Meanwhile the scandal surrounding the botched assassination attempt has reasserted its grip on Mr Netanyahu, as his foreign minister, David Levy, threatened to resign and a former secret service chief pulled out of an inquiry into the affair. Mr Levy said that he had not been consulted on the decision.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

Zimbabwe to seize white farmland

Andrew Meldrum in Harare and agencies

ZIMBABWE'S President Robert Mugabe said on Monday that his government would not compensate white farmers for land it planned to take to resettle thousands of peasants. "We are going to take the land and we are not going to pay a cent to any soul," Mr Mugabe was quoted as saying by the official news agency, Ziana.

Mr Mugabe has in the past threatened to seize white-owned commercial farms without compensating the owners, but his government has so far desisted from doing so. It has earmarked vast tracts of property under a controversial 1992 law that gives it power forcibly to take the land.

Mr Mugabe told a meeting of his Zanu-PF party and traditional leaders in the southern province of Matabeleland that Zimbabwe's former colonial master, Britain, should compensate the farmers as British settlers had seized the land from the local people without paying for it. "If the British government wants us to compensate its children, it must give us the money or it does the compensation itself," he said.

Mr Mugabe said his government did not have the money to pay for the farmland, adding that he would discuss the issue with the British prime minister, Tony Blair, at the Commonwealth heads of state meeting in Scotland next week.

Meanwhile poorly paid farm labourers have launched a wave of strikes that has brought the country's commercial farming sector to its knees. The countryside has been hit by two weeks of work stoppages that started in eastern Zimbabwe and then spread to the northern and central regions. Thousands of singing, chanting workers have also blocked highways for days. It is the biggest disruption to large-scale farming since independence in 1980. The workers, some of whom earn as little as $30 a month, are demanding $650.

"We have been downtrodden too long," shouted one striker blocking a road in the Headlands area east of the capital, Harare. "Zimbabwe is independent. We can stand up for our rights. We want better pay so our families can live better."

There are about 350,000 farm workers, making them Zimbabwe's largest single group of employees. Together with their families they number more than 2 million and live in often squalid conditions on big, usually white-owned farms producing tobacco, tea, coffee or maize.

The strikes have been mainly peaceful, but there have been isolated reports of workers burning farm vehicles. There have also been a few incidents in which white farming families have been threatened. But no serious injuries have been reported.

"We all like to think that it would not happen on our farm because our workers are well treated and loyal," said one farmer's wife. "But it's happening on every farm, even ours."

The strikes began under the auspices of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers' Union of Zimbabwe. But union officials are now trying to persuade [illegible] strikers to return to work while arbitration gets under way.

HK sees history through Chinese eyes

Andrew Higgins in Hong Kong

STAFF on the 10th floor of the Chiap Hing industrial building in Hong Kong are busy with pens and pencils re-tailoring accounts of the 19th century opium war, Chiang Kai-shek's 1949 retreat to Taiwan, and other episodes in Chinese history.

"It is a real bother but we have to make adjustments," explained Augustine Chow, manager of Everyman's Book Company, a leading publisher of textbooks for Hong Kong's schools. "Hong Kong is now part of China."

A store room is piled to the ceiling with the firm's new and entirely revised five-volume survey of China since 1766 BC.

Tung Chee-hwa, who replaced Britain's last governor Chris Patten as Hong Kong's leader on July 1, targets the teaching of history as the key to promoting Chinese patriotism. He said last weekend: "Until July 1, the opium war was referred to as a trade dispute, and China was referred to as a neighbouring country. All this has to change."

Fanning this desire for change was a recent opinion poll by the University of Hong Kong. It showed that 60 per cent of those surveyed felt no pride in their new status as Chinese nationals.

In his first policy address last week, Mr Tung combined a multi-billion dollar programme of new road and rail links between the former British colony and the rest of China with demands that Hong Kong end its mental isolation from the mainland. "For every individual there is a gradual process of getting to know Chinese history and culture so as to achieve a sense of belonging," he said.

But whose version of Chinese history? Pupils studying Everyman's new textbooks will no longer learn how Mao Zedong's 1949 revolution split the nation into a communist-run mainland — the People's Republic of China — and the Nationalist-ruled Taiwan, the Republic of China. Instead, they will learn of only one China, governed by Beijing. Taiwan no longer has a "government" but "authorities".

Britain's image is also revised. Everyman's pre-handover edition explained how Qing dynasty restrictions on trade in the 19th century "naturally aroused the dissatisfaction of foreign traders and created many disagreements and clashes". The new version emphasises "Britain's disregard for justice and its desire to flood China with large amounts of high-price opium in search of profit".

Like most aspects of post-colonial Hong Kong, the re-writing of history has few guidelines. An education department circular bans the use of terminology that violates the dogma of "one China", but the final choice of textbooks is up to schools.

Unlike Japan, Singapore and the rest of China, Hong Kong allows the free market to repackage the past. Mr Chow shows off a copy of his firm's old history textbook filled with annotations recommending that passages be amplified, trimmed or cut.

Fears that Beijing would rush to impose a comic-book communist clarity on the muddle left by historians have largely faded. Probably more worrying are Hong Kong's own spontaneous accommodations.

"The problem is not the central government telling us what to do, but people here . . . pandering to what they think Beijing wants us to do," said Chan Hon-sum, a leader of the Professional Teachers' Union.

Family of defector executed

Kathy Evans

THE Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, showed what happens to anyone who defects from his regime or plots to kill him when he executed 14 senior military officers and members of his ruling Ba'ath Party recently.

Many were former associates or members of the same clan as General Wafic Samurrai, a former Iraqi minister of military intelligence who fled the country three years ago, joined the opposition group the Iraqi National Congress, and sought asylum in London.

Like the general, most of the executed officers were from the Iraqi town of Samara, 125km north of Baghdad. Eight shared the general's family name.

The officers were arrested on December 14, days after an assassination attempt on President Saddam's son, Uday. In the wake of the shooting, the president planned to travel to his home town of Aluja where he maintains a palace for his family. The officers had planned to kill him there, said Iraqi opposition sources.

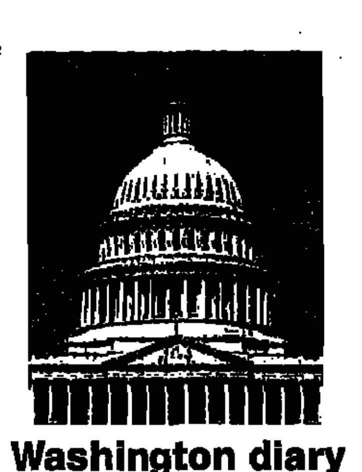
It is not the first time that the president has wiped out the families of his opponents, ensuring that few Iraqis risk opposing his regime. The elderly parents of Raad Ahmed, the Iraqi weightlifter who carried his country's flag at the Olympic Games, were arrested after he defected last year. Nothing has been heard of his father since. Four years ago, another opposition general, Talal Obeidi, heard that three of his brothers had been executed, and his mother, father, wife and one-year-old child had been jailed for life.

Commenting on the latest executions, Gen Samurrai said in London: "One of them was my cousin, another was head of my personal bodyguard at the military intelligence ministry. Others had been my friends since childhood."

The families have been forbidden by the regime to hold any public ceremonies at the funerals of the executed men.

Samara is known throughout Iraq as the country's most important source of military and intelligence service officers.

Tapes show measure of Clinton mind-set



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

WHAT is it about being president of the United States that makes the man who lives in the White House think that it is either advisable or desirable to record his every conversation and his every meeting for posterity?

This is not a delusion that afflicts those of us who are not, never have been, and never will be presidents. Ordinary mortals know only too well that home movies are best forgotten or only revealed to trusted intimates. Presidents, though, seem ready to dismiss all such embarrassment from their consideration. They remain sublimely confident that the rules that apply to us do not apply to them. They are free of all doubt that generations as yet unborn will want to hear what they said to the undersecretary for agriculture, or to see them with the foreign minister of Uzbekistan, or shaking hands with Barry Manilow.

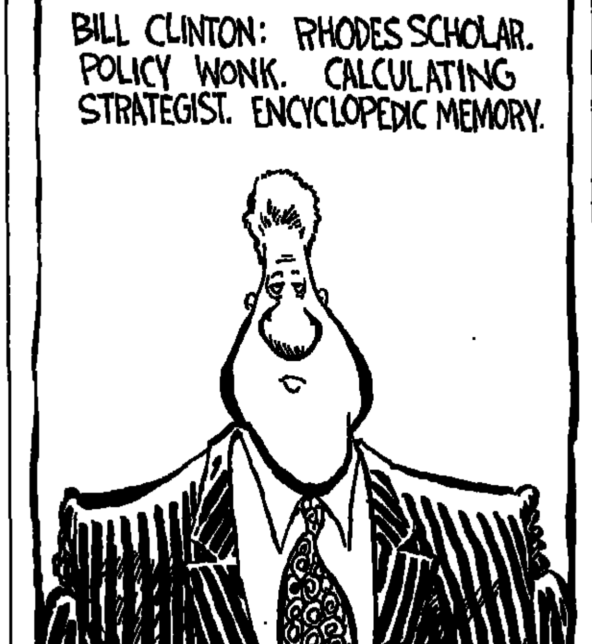
One might suppose that, with Richard Nixon's imperishable example in their minds, even the most unimpeachable president might think twice about offering such a massive hostage to fortune. But no. The siren call of a place in history seems simply irresistible.

What else can explain the videotapes of Bill Clinton, which were released to an unsuspecting world, and to his own unsuspecting attorney general, Janet Reno, last week? For those 44 tapes of a series of fund-raising morning coffee sessions, filmed by the so-called White House Communications Agency (an outfit that employs no fewer than 100 people for the purpose) serve little immediately discernible purpose for the president.

Granted, they show Clinton's matchless ability to work a room of his own supporters, and they convey a glimpse of the sycophancy which those supporters seem instinctively to adopt towards a president on such occasions. But there's a limit to the number of times one wants or needs to know about Clinton's golfing prowess or his weight loss, the topics that appear to be the common currency of these sessions. Of course, we would like to know what goes on when the doors close and the politicians get down to business, but that is precisely the point at which the cameras are switched off.

Reno said that the delay in providing Justice Department investigators with the videotapes had frustrated and angered her. And her comments marked an extraordinary public critique of the White House at a time when both Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore are the subjects of justice department inquiries that could lead to independent counsel investigations of their fund-raising activities.

In a funny way, the tapes reveal the truth of the old adage that the camera never lies. For although the Clinton videos — and there could be at least another hundred of them still to come — are both fascinating and banal, these are qualities which could also be applied more generally to the Clinton presidency.



More than 20 years ago, the Nixon White House tapes revealed an administration that was paranoid, grotesque and vindictive. The tapes did indeed tell the truth, and the truth, in the end, was what destroyed the Nixon presidency. Twenty years on, the truth is unlikely to destroy Clinton, for the simple reason that the Clinton administration's obsessions are not unlawful. But the tapes are embarrassing none the less. Clinton would have been better off without them.

Paradoxically, this is not a conclusion that one can draw about yet another set of White House tapes that have finally just seen the light of day. President Lyndon Johnson yielded little to Nixon in the paranoia stakes, and in some ways exceeded his successor as a compulsive taper of all his own presidential doings.

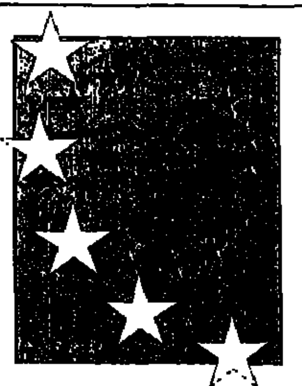
Though Nixon's voice-activated system yielded roughly 3,700 hours of recordings taken between 1971 and 1973, Johnson taped his presidency from its tragic beginning until its tragic end, a total of 9,500 conversations over nearly five and half years, the whole running to some 643 hours. He even had the tapes running on his first traumatic day as president, recording his calls from Air Force One as it flew back from Dallas to Washington with the bleeding body of the slain Jack Kennedy aboard.

And yet the Johnson tapes — the first tranche of which have now been published in the US* — tell another set of truths, at once monstrous and yet with an irresistible grandeur. Anyone who has read the two volumes of Robert Caro's masterly but unfinished biography of LBJ will not need telling that Johnson was a truly awesome political operator. But what the reader of Caro cannot fully know — because this mighty biography has not reached the years of power and fame covered by the new book — is how LBJ not only schemed and bludgeoned his way to power but also how he used that power to achieve so much for America's poor and America's blacks.

Johnson was destroyed by Vietnam, and so was his reputation. Yet as time passes his standing has grown. The LBJ tapes, while not absolving him from his Vietnam policy, will enhance that standing still further. Perhaps, after all, such tapes do tell the truth. But whether this is good or bad news for Bill Clinton, it is too soon to tell.

Taking Charge: the Johnson White House Tapes 1963-1964, edited and with commentary by Michael R Beschloss (Simon & Schuster, $30). The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis is reviewed on page 18

Yeltsin's big idea startles Strasbourg



Europe this week

Martin Walker

BORIS YELTSIN came to the Council of Europe summit in Strasbourg last week to enrol Russia in a new legal regime of human rights with a single court whose powers will stretch from Belfast to Vladivostok, part of a subtle embrace that also seeks to establish a "distinctive European social model" across the continent. But he also took the opportunity to launch a startling new diplomatic initiative whose implications could be profound.

President Yeltsin snubbed the British and startled most of the leaders at the European summit by announcing a regular new process of annual meetings of "the Big Three" — Germany, France and Russia — as a keystone of what President Jacques Chirac and the Russian leader agreed would be "Big Europe". Despite his hopes of a leading European role and his hearty welcome at the Kremlin earlier in the week, Tony Blair was left out of the plan, which was agreed at a *tête-à-tête* dinner between the French and Russian presidents on the eve of the Council of Europe summit, and was later backed by Germany's Helmut Kohl.

"We have agreed in principle to hold these meetings, which are indispensable to the creation of Big Europe with Russia. It will be a vast territory of liberty, of democracy," Yeltsin said. "We'll meet once a year, and we have not decided where. I will go wherever Jacques [Chirac] wants, or where Helmut [Kohl] invites us."

A classic Yeltsin surprise, but given serious weight by the public endorsement of Chirac at a joint press conference, the proposal for a new Big Three summit process had diplomats scrambling to establish what this might portend. Britain was taken wholly off-guard by the plan, as were Italy and Poland among other European powers. British diplomatic sources told the Guardian: "We enjoy very close relationships with Russia, France and Germany, and these meetings are a matter for them. We'll have to study what Yeltsin said, and ask him about it."

Having been invited into the Council of Europe as a reassurance that Russia was not being isolated, Yeltsin appears to have established serious links with France and Germany that may mollify those Russian nationalists still outraged by the expansion of the Nato alliance up to Russia's borders. In return, by joining the Council, Yeltsin has committed Russia to accept the rule of law and a new and distinctive European social model.

The wide-ranging ambitions of the Council, long dismissed as a diplomatic talking-shop, won a powerful endorsement in Strasbourg. Blair, Kohl and Chirac gathered with Yeltsin and 36 other European leaders in "a summit to consolidate democracy". While they formally endorsed a series of new social codes, from gender equality to joint action against organised crime and drug abuse, from a ban on human cloning to protection for ethnic minorities, the broader agenda of "social Europe" would have infuriated Britain's Tory party, had they been in power or not otherwise distracted by their soul-searching conference in Blackpool.

"The Council of Europe seems to me to be the organisation best placed to elaborate a European social model, in defence of social rights and social cohesion," said Leni Fischer, the president of its parliamentary assembly, which is drawn from the 40 parliaments of the member states.

"The Council is now the institution of reference for human rights; it should also become the reference for social rights for 800 million Europeans."

This rhetoric was familiar to Yeltsin. As the old Soviet state squirmed under attacks on its human rights record, it usually countered by contrasting the United States model of human rights based on the individual with its own assertion of social rights: the right to a job, to housing and public health care.

The Council of Europe's agenda is now to have both. It did not discomfort Blair to include Britain in a European Social Charter that includes "the right to work, including the right to vocational training . . . the right to social and medical assistance, the right to benefit from social welfare services . . . the right to protection of health, the right to social security . . . the right to protection against poverty and social exclusion, the right to adequate housing".

There could hardly be a more precise list of what the European model intends, nor a clearer challenge to the free-market "Anglo-Saxon model". But the Council of Europe is rooted in treaties with the force of international law that in the past have compelled Britain to bar corporal punishment in schools, France to reform its phone-tapping rules and Italy to require access to lawyers for those accused by the state.

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe has long played the role of the canary down the mine, the institution in which Europe's would-be new members undergo their probation before being absorbed into Nato and the European Union.

There are tests to be passed, and judgments to be made, and in the words of the Council's secretary-general, Daniel Tarschys: "All of Europe is here except those who have excluded themselves by abandoning democratic principles — the Yugoslavs and the Belarussians".

The Croatians and Slovaks remain under grudging and watchful sufferance, as if to be inspired to do better in this forum that has witnessed so many of the continent's grandest declarations, from Winston Churchill's 1949 call for "a unified European army" to Mikhail Gorbachev's evocation of "a common European home". In 1997 Yeltsin's proposal for Big Three summits for the Big Europe may yet prove as portentous.

Fo wins Nobel prize for literature

John Hooper in Rome

THE way Dario Fo learnt he had won the Nobel Prize for Literature was all of a piece with his wacky comedy. He and one of Italy's best-known television starlets had set off from Rome up the Autosole to record a show in Milan.

They were nearing Orvieto when a fast car loaded with reporters drew alongside. The starlet, who was at the wheel, tried to ignore them. Then one gestured to Fo and held up a handwritten card. "You've won the Nobel," it said.

Within minutes, playwright, starlet and journalists were downing champagne in the unlikely setting of a motorway service station.

"I was astounded," Fo said later. The writer of Accidental Death Of An Anarchist and Can't Pay? Won't Pay! suffered a stroke last year that partially blinded him, but the Swedish academy that awards the prize said: "With a blend of laughter and gravity, he opens our eyes to abuses and injustices in society."

It was therefore not until some eight hours later that the new laureate reached his destination, where another, bigger contingent of reporters was waiting to ask him — among other things — what he would do with the cash.

"I've already decided," Fo said. The money would go towards trying to free three men whose grim fate is bound up inextricably — and maybe even a bit uncomfortably — with his most famous work.

Given lavish extra funding and backing from the world's latest literary Nobel, their continued imprisonment is set to become an international *cause célèbre*.

Fo's Accidental Death Of An Anarchist deals with a true event. On December 15, 1969, one Pino Pinelli fell to his death from an upper storey of the police headquarters in Milan. At the time Pinelli was being interrogated about a fatal bombing three days earlier.

Fo believed Pinelli had — in the grisly slang of the time — been *suicidato* (suicided). He and other left-wingers were equally convinced that the anarchists were being made to take the blame for an outrage that had been plotted by the intelligence services and committed by the extreme right.

That much is well enough known. What is less well known is that the police officer in charge of Pinelli's interrogation was later murdered.

For years, the question of who killed chief superintendent Luigi Calabresi remained as much of a mystery as the riddle of who planted the bomb about which he and his men were interrogating Pinelli. Then, in 1988, a former member of a disbanded extreme leftwing group came forward to confess his role in the murder.

Leonardo Marino is nowadays the owner of a roadside caravan-bar. He offers doughnuts and pancakes to trippers on the coast south of La Spezia. But, as improbable as it seems, back in the days when Italy was being torn apart by extremist violence this paunchy, grey-haired stall owner was a militant in Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle).

In his testimony first to the police and then to the courts, he said it was he who had driven the car for the men who, on the morning of May 17, 1972, shot dead Calabresi.

Offered a deal by the prosecution that ensured he did not go to jail, Marino went further. He incriminated three others: Ovidio Bompressi who — he said — pulled the trigger, and two of the leaders of Lotta Continua, Giorgio Pietrostefani and Adriano Sofri, who — he claimed — had ordered the killing. Last January, after a characteristically tortuous and lengthy passage through the Italian courts, the three men were each given sentences of more than 20 years.

As things stand, they will all die in jail. Yet the manner of their conviction could have come from one of Fo's black farces.

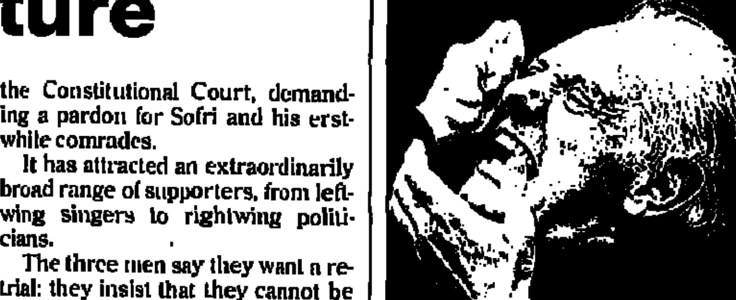
They were found guilty on the uncorroborated word of a single witness who had been promised his freedom in return and whose testimony was shot through with inconsistencies. The key items of evidence, the bullets and the getaway car, had been destroyed. The verdict came just four months before the statute of limitations would have applied to the crime.

Sofri, in particular, had long since become a model citizen. He was a teacher and writer of repute and had recently won the gratitude of his government for negotiating the release of three Italians held hostage by guerrillas in the Russian separatist region of Chechenia. A hundred and fifty thousand Italians have put their signatures to a petition, got up by a former president of the Constitutional Court, demanding a pardon for Sofri and his erstwhile comrades.

It has attracted an extraordinarily broad range of supporters, from leftwing singers to rightwing politicians.

The three men say they want a retrial: they insist that they cannot be pardoned for something they never did. But, in a system that can scarcely cope with the normal flow of work, securing a retrial is a daunting task and could take years.

To try to force the pace, Sofri and his fellow inmates have announced that they are preparing a hunger strike to the death. Many of their backers are appalled, convinced that a hunger strike would undermine their cause, bringing back evil memories of the revolutionary left's coercive tactics in the 1970s.


Dario Fo: astounded by win

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Murdoch says Diana's death will save his papers money

RUPERT MURDOCH, the media baron credited with doing more to test the limits of press reporting in Britain than any other proprietor, sparked controversy when he admitted that the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, would save his newspapers money.

Speaking for the first time on the vexed questions of privacy and the use of intrusive paparazzi pictures, Mr Murdoch said he had no regrets that his newspapers had bought such pictures. His only regret was that the publications — including the News of the World and The Sun — "paid far too much for them".

Since the death of the princess national newspaper editors, including those employed by Mr Murdoch, have agreed to abide by a stricter code of conduct which will virtually outlaw the use of snatched pictures. They are divided, however, on whether there should be some form of privacy law.

Unsurprisingly Mr Murdoch, who is the biggest of the proprietors, is against any such law which, he argued, would be "a privilege for the already privileged". For the moment, at least, the Government is prepared to give self-regulation a chance, though it will be watching closely to see how the industry reacts to the first serious transgression of the new code.

A long-standing reason for the reluctance to legislate has been that a workable act would be difficult to frame and would probably have a rough passage through Parliament. There is now a second reason: that the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, would not want to make enemies of the powerful papers owned by Mr Murdoch, whom he worked so hard to woo before the general election.

BIG BROTHER will be watching the Conservatives, when the House of Commons reassembles, to see whether they make remarks or gestures which offend newly-elected women MPs, 101 of whom are Labour. Many of them have complained of sexist comments and sniggers by six Tory MPs, one said to be a prominent front-bencher.

Janet Anderson, a senior government whip, said Labour had launched an inquiry. This would involve scanning videotapes of the House in session and checking whether sexist comments, not heard by the Speaker, had been picked up by TV microphones.

"The remarks vary from 'Get back to the kitchen' to 'You must have PMT' or 'You're menopausal'," said Ms Anderson. "Some of those Tories just don't think women should be in the House."

Teresa Gorman, a Tory MP, said she had had lots of offensive things said about her "but I took it on the chin". Labour women won't. Offenders who are identified will be reported to the Speaker.

A SUGGESTION by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, that a royal commission be set up to consider the decriminalisation of soft drugs was flatly rejected by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

Lord Bingham made clear that he did not back decriminalisation, but he thought the subject deserved "detached, objective, independent consideration". The Home Secretary responded: "The more I examine the evidence, I am less and less convinced, if I ever were, of the case for decriminalisation."

The Lord Chief Justice is not alone in his views: several chief constables have also come round to believing that the law needs to be reconsidered. The Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, also said he would consider making cannabis available on prescription for the use of multiple sclerosis sufferers.

NEIL HAMILTON, the disgraced former Tory MP involved in the "cash for questions" affair, was due to give evidence this week to the Commons Standards and Privileges Committee, during which he said he would "name names" and give details of others who had broken Commons rules.

Mr Hamilton was found by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey, to have "fallen well below the standards expected of an MP" in taking up to £25,000 in cash from Mohammed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, and from the lobbyist, Ian Greer, without recording it in the register of members' interests.

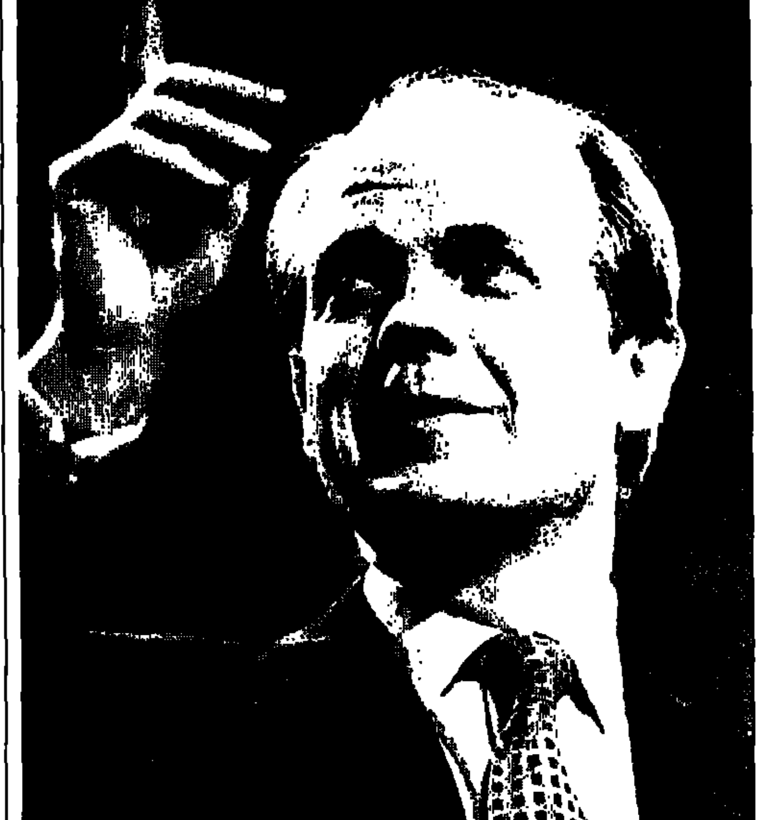
Defiant throughout, Mr Hamilton insisted that he was not going to be made a scapegoat. He accused Sir Gordon of "reinterpreting" the rules on members' interests and said: "If that is the case, there are many other MPs who are in the same boat as me, and I want them to be treated in the same way as me."

THERE WAS much speculation about who would pay the rent for Bagshot Park, an imposing Gothic pile in Surrey which Prince Edward, the Queen's youngest son, is to rent as a home for himself and for Ardent Productions, the TV company in which he has an interest.

Before moving in, the prince will contribute to a £2 million refurbishment of the property, which comes with 87 acres of fine parkland. The rent is believed to be £300,000 a year. But Ardent has shown losses of £1 million in its first three years, and the prince's only other income is £96,000 a year from the Queen, which is supposed to be for his private office at Buckingham Palace.

Austin

SO, IT'S WHO DARES WINS TO WHO CARES WINS...



Compassionate gesture . . . William Hague spoke of a 'changing Conservatism that acknowledges its mistakes' PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

We care too, says Hague

Michael White

WILLIAM HAGUE last week repackaged the Conservative party as compassionate, tolerant and principled while reassuring traditionalists within the ranks that the new Conservatism will not discard core values of free enterprise, self-reliance and the nation state.

In his first speech as leader since he succeeded John Major in July, Mr Hague moved to regain some of the moral high ground which Tony Blair has made his own. He also launched a sustained assault on New Labour as a slick and cynical government.

"We have no intention of stooping to a new politics without conscience. Let them stoop — we will conquer," he told 5,000 Tory activists at the party conference in Blackpool.

"Conservatives care about right and wrong. I care about right and wrong. And I believe that only a party that is able to distinguish between right and wrong and is prepared to stand up for what it believes — and looks to the long-term future of the country, not its own short-term interest — is able to offer Britain that strong and principled government," he said.

John Prescott, the deputy prime minister, said the conference had proved that the Tories "want to bury Thatcherism, but have absolutely no idea what to put in its place".

The new Tory leadership is waiting to see how radical the Blair government is before reshaping its own policies, and the address gave little away. Mr Hague clung to the "not in the foreseeable future" formula for opposing British membership of the European single currency.

His one significant utterance was his apology to the conference for the disastrous Thatcher/Major decision to enter the exchange rate mechanism in 1990 — "a great mistake" — which triggered the collapse both of sterling and the government's credibility.

Mr Hague emphasised the Conservative party's "understanding and tolerance of people making their own decisions about how to lead their lives" — a coded acknowledgement that divorce, single parenthood and gay relationships are facts of modern life.

The conference listened intently to their young leader's much-trailed passages about compassion — "not a bolt-on extra to Conservatism, but at its very core" — but did not applaud as he invoked the courage of the disabled. His attacks on traditional hot-button issues — European federalism, Labour weakness on defence and municipal sleaze and the integrity of the United Kingdom — fared much better.

At the end of the speech, almost 20 years to the day after his precocious teenage debut in the same hall, Mr Hague was rewarded with flag-waving applause that was prolonged but not euphoric.

Comment, page 12

Conference in brief

Portillo rewrites Tory script
Michael Portillo, the former defence minister whose previous conference speeches included bombastic references to the SAS military unit, admitted that the defeated government's 18-year rule had ended because people saw the Tories as inhumane, disloyal and selfish. His speech set the tone of a conference marked by an emphasis on Tory compassion.

Blame heaped on MPs
In a very public inquest into the Tories' disastrous general election performance, many speakers at Blackpool denounced the behaviour of squabbling and sleaze-ridden MPs.

Hague wins reform mandate
The Tory leader, William Hague, won overwhelming endorsement for his leadership and package of internal reforms. The overhaul is intended to streamline the party and increase grassroots participation.

Tebbit isolated in race row
Lord Tebbit called for an end to the "divisive force" of multi-culturalism in Britain. He was fiercely rebuked by Mr Hague, but, undaunted, he went on to criticise the party leader for attending a gay pride march.

A thunderously adequate performance

SKETCH
Simon Hoggart

THE foetus has landed. William Hague's conference speech might have created something less than panting ecstasy but it was good enough to establish him as leader in the Tories' hearts as well as on the party's letterheads.

The speech did leave one mystery: how is it that a party which claims to be proud, independent and free can rise adoringly as one to cheer a young man they'd barely heard of a year ago, foisted on them against their wishes by a parliamentary party they seem to despise?

Still, Mr Hague's was a highly adequate performance, definitively not bad, thunderously more or less up to it.

The effect was also helped rather than hindered by his platform voice. When he announced "Conservatives ca-a-a-re" you could almost see James Herriot on a windswept moor, up to his elbow in a poorly sheep.

He played the Yorkshire card as if it were the ace of spades. "I was born in Rotherham. Around where I lived they thought a Conservative was something you spread on your toast!"

As a Yorkshireman myself I find this kind of blatant Tykeism offensive, creating a stereotype of us as stupid, laconic and rude.

The most important part of the speech was about compassion. The Tories are now all for it.

"Go to your local NSPCC or Oxfam . . . and you'll probably find most of your Conservative branch committee there," Mr Hague said.

Really? Times must have changed in the Tory party. "Do, Lady Marshall-Pugh, I do hope we can tempt you to our bring and buy sale on Saturday!"

"I'm *soo* sorry, but time and the Somali Lesbian and Gay Support Group wait for no man!"

John Major asked us to love him because his father was a small businessman; Hague by contrast went into an amusing routine about his father's soft drink operation: "Such well-known brands as Hague Cola and Hague Dandelion and Burdock." This gentle self-deprecation will do him no harm in the future.

Britain will meet euro entry criteria

Martin Walker in Luxembourg and Ewen MacAskill

BRITAIN edged closer to joining the European single currency on Monday when the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, released figures showing it will easily meet the entry criteria.

Although Mr Brown publicly maintained a wait-and-see approach, in private the Government is shifting in favour of the single currency.

The Chancellor, releasing Britain's "convergence statement", claimed the country would easily qualify for the euro, although "it is very unlikely we would join in the first wave. There will be formidable obstacles".

While entry in 1999 is all but ruled out, Tony Blair may opt to go in soon afterwards. Downing Street refused to deny that the Prime Minister would make a statement clarifying the position at a Luxembourg jobs summit due to be held next month.

Following newspaper reports that the Treasury was trying to bounce Mr Blair into a pro-entry decision, Mr Brown denied that the Cabinet was split over the question. He reaffirmed that if the Government did opt to join it would hold a referendum on the issue.

Peter Lilley, the shadow chancellor, said it was clear that the Government had reached a conclusion on a single currency.

"Before the election, Tony Blair said he loved the pound and that he feels emotional when he sees the Queen's head on a £10 note. Now it is clear his word is worth about as much as a £9 note," Mr Lilley said.

Mr Brown, proclaiming the strength of the British economy, said: "In or out of monetary union, the UK has set in place in the course of the last few months the foundations for a period of sustainable and long term growth and the ability to create jobs."

He also presented Britain's own employment action plan, based on "job-creating flexibility . . . helping people from welfare into work . . . and improving the workings of markets". Britain wanted to create "a third way, between rampant free market economics and stifling over-regulation, combining economic German efficiency and social inclusion", he said.

Mr Brown's remarks foreshadowed the Government's intention to make its presidency of the European Union next year focus on job creation, deregulation and the streamlining of the single market.

Indonesian arms deal undercuts Cook's line

David Hencke and John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE Government has approved 11 new arms contracts worth millions of pounds to Indonesia following Robin Cook's foreign policy initiative of refusing to sell military equipment to oppressive regimes.

The value of the deals far outweighs the Foreign Secretary's high-profile cancellation, just before this month's Labour party conference, of up to £1 million worth of armoured personnel carriers and a consignment of sniper rifles to the Suharto regime.

Details of the number of new arms deals were released by the trade minister, Lord Clinton-Davis, in a letter to Ann Clwyd, chairman of the all-party parliamentary human rights group.

In the letter, Lord Clinton-Davis says that the Department of Trade and Industry has approved 11 new contracts for equipment under the so-called "military list" which require special licences to be sent abroad.

The list covers surveillance equipment, electronics and telecommunications systems, sensors, lasers, nuclear equipment, space vehicles, bombs and ammunition.

The ministry is declining to disclose details of the orders which are protected by the Official Secrets Act unless companies agree to waive the commercial confidentiality surrounding the deals. Another 44 Indonesian contracts are being examined by the ministry.

Lord Clinton-Davis adds: "I hope you will understand that it would be impractical to inform you of each and every licensing decision in respect of an export to Indonesia. However . . . we are committed to the publication of an annual report on UK strategic export controls.

"This will set out the state of export controls and report on their application, in line with our manifesto commitment to increase the transparency and accountability of decisions on export licences for arms."

The disclosure of the new deals renewed the row with Labour backbenchers over the Foreign Secretary's ethical foreign policy.

Ms Clwyd, Labour MP for Cynon Valley, said: "I am genuinely sad that the Government has gone ahead with these new orders, particularly while the Foreign Office were saying the policy was under review. The ministry's refusal to disclose details also shows the need for a freedom of information act so that the public can be properly informed about government decisions."

UK arms fair, page 24

"YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU"

Altered image . . . A new version of the famous poster appeal for army recruits by Lord Kitchener in 1914, now bearing the face of a black officer, was unveiled as part of a campaign to attract recruits from ethnic minorities and to eradicate racism from the army

Carey sees new spiritualism

Alex Bellos

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, said this week that the public's reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales proved that Britain remained deeply spiritual despite the decline in the number of churchgoers.

The challenge to the Church of England was to "adapt and innovate" to harness this faith, he said during a keynote lecture in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire.

Dr Carey, who comes from the less traditional wing of the Church, said many Anglican services had a "prolonged wordiness" and — in a similar way to Elton John's song at Diana's funeral — could be made more relevant to the modern world.

He said: "I discern a continuing deep respect for the churches when the faith is practised with sincerity; something of which we saw in the humbling, astonishing reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

"Of course, flowers, messages and the spontaneous outpouring of grief do not by themselves indicate an implicit spirituality. But it was noticeable how many makeshift shrines appeared. And as well as the flowers piling up outside Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace, they were taken in vast quantities to our cathedrals and parish churches."

He added that the Church needed to learn lessons from this as Britain approached 2000. "If I am right in painting a picture not antagonistic to any faith but in many cases distant from the claims of organised religion, what does this have to say about the 'way ahead' in mission as we enter this new millennium?"

He went on to praise the way churches all over the country had reacted to the death. "The funeral service . . . had all the dignity and beauty that we associate with Westminster Abbey, but the dean also had the courage to listen to what people were longing for in the midst of their shock, grief and pain."

HRT 'is worth the risk'

Chris Mihill

WOMEN taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) are probably decreasing their chance of early death because of the protective effects of the treatment against heart disease, cancer specialists said last week.

Some studies showed that HRT could cut the risk of heart disease by 30 per cent.

The biggest study in the world so far into the links between HRT and breast cancer has concluded that there will be a small increase in cases of cancer, but probably no increase in deaths.

The cancers are generally smaller in women taking HRT, and confined to the breast, making them easier to treat.

The study, carried out by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund (ICRF), concludes that there will be two additional cases of breast cancer per 1,000 women taking HRT for a five-year period. This is on top of the 45 cases which occur naturally per 1,000 women aged 50 to 70. The excess risk disappears within five years of stopping HRT.

The study, published in the Lancet, looked at 54,000 women with breast cancer compared with 108,000 healthy women. It involved an analysis of 51 studies from 21 countries, comprising some 90 per cent of the published evidence on the link with breast cancer.

Valerie Beral, co-ordinator of the study, told a press conference in London there had always been a theoretical chance that HRT would increase the chance of breast cancer.

Professor Beral, of the ICRF's epidemiology unit at Oxford, stressed that the studies had looked at cases, not deaths, and that overall there was nothing in the findings to prevent women taking HRT, as the risks had to be balanced against the benefits.

In Brief

BRITAIN will submit a bill of rights to Parliament next month, finally incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into British law, Prime Minister Tony Blair said.

ABOUT 200 gay men and women are among 35,000 unmarried couples allowed to apply for their foreign-born partners to settle in Britain under changes in the immigration law.

A FORMER computer operator has been awarded a record £358,000 against Lambeth council, London, in what was described by by the Employment Appeal Tribunal as the "worst case of persistent racial discrimination" it had dealt with.

LONDON has a 57 per cent higher burglary rate than New York, according to the University of California at Berkeley.

ROGER BELL, a British soldier serving in Cyprus, was fined £750 for assaulting two English tourists outside a discothèque in Ayia Napa.

WEST YORKSHIRE Chief Constable Keith Hellawell has been appointed by the Government as Britain's "drugs tsar". He will co-ordinate efforts to tackle drug trafficking and addiction problems.

MAJOR Eric Joyce, a serving officer who publicly accused the army of snobbery, racism and sexual discrimination, has been told he is likely to face a court martial.

ASIANS in the civil service are stuck in the lower ranks throughout their careers because of widespread racial discrimination, according to a new report compiled by the Labour MP Keith Vaz.

MEN aged 15 to 35 living in Plein-Fougères, Brittany, underwent voluntary DNA tests to assist the investigation into the murder of a Cornish schoolgirl, Caroline Dickinson, in July 1996.

THE DAILY MAIL diarist Nigel Dempster, chronicler of the trials and tribulations of the wealthy, was fined £10,000 for contempt of court after repeating a libellous allegation concerning the millionaire Baron Steven Bentinck. His newspaper was fined £25,000.

ELIZABETH Barrett Browning's costly familiar sonnet How Do I Love Thee? is Britain's most cherished love poem, according to a BBC poll.

GEORGE MALCOLM, one of the century's great choirmasters and a renowned harpsichordist, pianist and conductor, has died aged 80.

GUARDIAN WEE[KLY] October 19

Hospitals to get extra £300m

Anne Perkins

THE Government is to spend about £300 million extra to prevent a winter hospital crisis in the first serious breach of Chancellor Gordon Brown's stranglehold on public spending.

Mr Brown on Tuesday confirmed the decision to use savings from defence and trade budgets. In a statement, he said the money will come from existing resources and that the reallocation showed that the Government was committed to making patient care a top priority.

The money will be used to try to stop operations being cancelled and to slow the growth in waiting lists as the onset of winter increases the pressure on the health service.

The Opposition accused the Government of a U-turn.

Mr Brown earned the nickname of Iron Chancellor by insisting that he would not increase public spending above the previous government's targets, that departmental spending ceilings would not be breached, and that there would be no shuffling of resources between departments.

It is understood that Treasury officials scrutinising the way Britain's contingency reserve was being spent spotted £170 million earmarked for a Ministry of Defence overspend. It was decided the MoD would have to make savings elsewhere rather than be bailed out by the Treasury.

Alistair Darling, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, insisted the cuts in the defence budget would not have an impact on Britain's frontline defence capabilities.

"I'm making it clear to the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, and to all my colleagues that they have got to ensure their departments are run efficiently and properly," he said.

A further £100 million will come from funds for nuclear power no longer required by the Department of Trade. £30 million will come from administrative savings within the health service.

The Shadow Chancellor, Peter Lilley, said: "The Government has cynically abandoned its core pre-election pledge to deliver shorter waiting lists. And it has repudiated its promise to stick within public spending plans department by department."

But Mr Darling, in an interview on BBC radio, said Labour had inherited a difficult situation: "We have had to take some very hard and tough choices, and alongside that process we are looking at how existing spending can be reallocated.

"This year, over £100 million previously spent on red tape is being diverted into frontline care . . . that's good management."

Mr Brown has already announced an extra £1 billion of spending for health in the next financial year.

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, welcomed the news. "This is a significantly useful contribution. Of course, we would have liked more but with good targeting and coordination this should really help this winter," she said.

James Johnson, chairman of the British Medical Association's consultants' committee, also welcomed the move, but added that it was important that the extra funding be made available quickly if problems were to be avoided over the winter.

"I earnestly hope the extra money can be released to the NHS now so that some wards that have been mothballed can be reopened and additional staff recruited," he said.

The Liberal Democrats' health spokesman, Simon Hughes, said: "The NHS clearly needs significantly more funds. Rather than being defensive about this and making excuses for NHS under-funding, the Government needs to be more imaginative and keep on finding ways of releasing the real increase in resources which the NHS needs."

Army faces flak following rape acquittal

Sarah Boseley

SIX army officers alleged to ha[ve] gang-raped a 23-year-old wom[an] walked free from court last wee[k] after the judge halted their trial, de[-] claring that there was not enou[gh] consistent evidence to convict them.

Judge Julian Hall instructed th[e] jury at Oxford crown court to retur[n] not-guilty verdicts on the men, wh[o] had denied raping the woman, [a] student, in a bedroom of the Roy[al] Military College of Science [at] Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, in Ma[y] last year. Their counsel claimed th[e] woman had consented.

The judge said the woman's ev[i]dence had been "riddled wi[th] inconsistencies". The defence [at]tacks on her were not "attacks o[n] her morals or on her way of li[fe], they are attacks on her credibili[ty] or reliability as a witness in th[e] case", he said.

But the judge had harsh wor[ds] for the defendants, who now f[ace] army disciplinary proceedings. "[If] six men think it's a good idea [to] have sex with one woman, they r[un] the risk of being accused of rap[e] [I] think they have brought this pr[os]ecution on themselves."

The case has been damaging [to] the army, which has faced critic[ism] over several cases of sexual mis[con]duct and violence in recent yea[rs]. Critics claim the army way of l[ife] and the restrictions it imposes are [in] part to blame.

After a 19-year-old soldier was a[c]quitted of rape at Catterick in Ju[ly] his solicitor, Charles Shirtcliffe, s[aid] he thought the army offered per[il]ous opportunities to youngster[s]. "They live in a culture of wom[an]ing and drink, and have too muc[h] time to indulge in both," he said.

Other critics speak of a testost[er]one culture in which soldiers spe[nd] most of their working and leis[ure] time together. Women, for some, [are] seen as no more than sex objects.

Defence budget dwarfed by £32bn mental health bill

David Brindle

MENTAL health problems cost Britain £32 billion a year — half as much again as the defence budget, according to a new report.

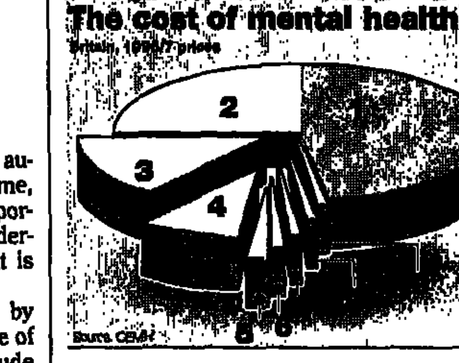
Social security payments to people with mental illness are put at £7.6 billion, equivalent to three-quarters of the single parents' benefits bill which so preoccupies ministers.

Treatment of mental illness is estimated to cost £4.2 billion, 10 per cent of the National Health Service's spending and about the same as the service's expenditure on drugs.

The calculations were made on behalf of the Health Education Authority to coincide with World Mental Health Day last week and promote preventive mental health care. Lynne Friedli, head of the authority's mental health programme, said: "Mental health is just as important as physical health and underpins everything we do — but it is still taboo."

The costings were prepared by health economists at the Institute of Psychiatry in London. They include all forms of mental health problem, from stress to acute psychosis, but exclude learning disability or mental handicap.

The £32.1 billion total is equal to 4 per cent of Britain's gross domestic product. More than a third, almost £12 billion, is attributed to the cost of lost employment and production in respect of people with schizophrenia, depression, stress and anxiety. Another £2.5 billion is ascribed to lost productivity of people who commit suicide.



A further £2.8 billion is put down to the costs of informal care of people with mental illness by family or friends.

One in seven people is assumed to suffer mental health problems. Studies suggest one in five will do so at some time in their life.

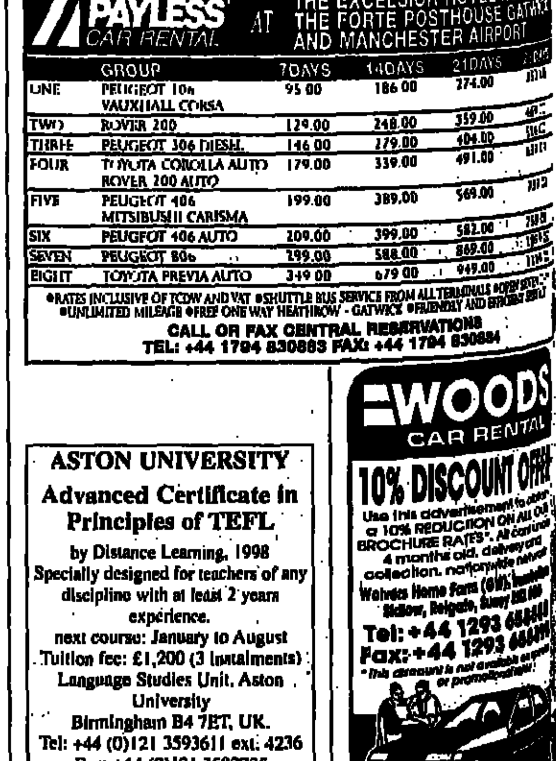
Dr Friedli said the hard cash figures did not show the broader social costs of mental illness, "the misery caused by loss of self-esteem, discrimination and social exclusion".

The authority is urging local authorities, employers and schools to do more to assess the impact of what they do on people's mental well-being.

● Two people a month die at the hands of persons with mental illness released into the community, according to figures released from the Zito Trust, which was set up after Jonathon Zito was killed by a schizophrenic in 1992. The trust claims 104 people have been murdered in similar circumstances.

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE



PERSONAL

Fit winners of the Nobel prize

PEOPLE do count even in a world where nation states can look puny. Last week's announcement in Oslo of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize testifies to the influence that a small group of social reformers can still achieve in an anonymous global market. Who would have given the six original co-founders of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) any hope of success when they began their campaign in 1992? Certainly not the cynical junior Tory defence minister, Lord Howe, who earlier this year described Princess Diana as "a distraction" and "loose cannon" for becoming involved in the worldwide campaign. Yet just five years on from ICBL's launch, they are now a coalition of 1,000 non-governmental organisations in 60 states. Behind the scenes they played a key part in last month's Oslo conference, at which 100 states drafted the text of a landmine ban that is due to be signed in Ottawa in December. Last week the Nobel Committee awarded its annual peace prize to the ICBL and its co-ordinator, Jody Williams of the United States. Ironically, the US is one of a handful of states still holding out against a total ban. Russian, another resistor, signed up last week.

The real winners are the thousands of farmers, villagers and children in war-torn countries where landmines may no longer be implanted. The UN estimates there are 110 million mines in 70 states, most of which are in the Third World. A further 100 million are believed to be held in military stockpiles. One of the biggest problems is the disproportionate cost between manufacture (a mere $3) and the huge expense of removing implanted mines (up to $1,000 per mine). An estimated 26,000 people are killed every year — some 500 a week. Most of the victims are innocent civilians. The International Committee of the Red Cross summed up their use succinctly: "Mines are the greatest violators of humanitarian law and laying them is a monstrous form of terrorism . . . they are fighters that never miss, strike blindly, and go on killing long after hostilities are ended." The US should end its opposition.

A man who won't resign

BINYAMIN NETANYAHU, by any rational standard, should no longer be prime minister of Israel. The failed assassination in Amman, which is now revealed in full detail, betrays a strategic as well as moral blindness, and has strengthened rather than weakened the hand of those he describes as Israel's enemies. If Mr Netanyahu were to resign, the sigh of relief among Israel's friends as well as its Arab neighbours would echo round the world. Yet the polls show that while nearly 60 per cent of Israelis are dissatisfied with his performance, the same percentage believe that he should not resign. Under the new rules, it would require the political impossibility of a two-thirds majority in the Knesset to remove him. The disastrous contradiction of a man who creates disasters and then thrives on them has to be understood if it is ever to be solved.

The adjectives piled on him by commentators in Jerusalem describe someone living in an imaginary reality, whose attempt to procure the assassination of the Hamas leader Khaled Meshal was "amateurish, disgraceful and ridiculous", and who has ensured that the Hamas movement is the sole winner. Security experts concur that the Hamas threat is co-ordinated from elsewhere and that the public arena of Amman would be the last place to choose. Mr Meshal is seen as a relatively moderate leader on the political wing, and Israel itself has pointed the finger at Damascus. If the assassination had been successful, it would only have strengthened Hamas's military wing. But the Labour leader, Ehud Barak, was conspicuously careful to refrain from criticism until the two Israeli agents were returned from Amman. He called the botched attempt "pathetic", but refrained from demanding the prime minister's resignation. Mr Barak appears to have decided some time ago that he will not win more votes by sounding too liberal, and is going instead for "Bibi compatibility".

Mr Netanyahu has relied on the emotive argument that in the war against terrorism some battles will be lost as well as others won. Guided by his image adviser from the United States, he has employed the same mendacious but successful negative propaganda that won him the election to sway the public again. So far he has been able to sidestep questions about the damage done to Yasser Arafat — his supposed partner in peace-making — and the boost given to Hamas. Instead he has denounced the press for publishing "a whole fabric of lies" (without identifying what they are) when vital interests are alleged to be at stake. This sort of language also reduces the chance — a slim one already — that any of Mr Netanyahu's less hardline competitors in the Likud leadership might see an opportunity to supplant him.

None of this should inhibit the US and any other government with influence in Jerusalem from making absolutely clear its displeasure with an action that places Mr Netanyahu on the same level as the terrorists (compounded by the apparent use of a nerve gas in the attack). It has moved the whole crisis on to a new stage in which Hamas, through the figure of Sheikh Yassin, may have entered the political dialogue with its own peace terms. This may only be a lull before new storms, but it could conceivably lead to a new way forward. Israel — and the Palestinians — should be so lucky.

Tory fight for the centre ground

WE CANNOT yet hail the New Conservatism, but last week in Blackpool the Tories began to build it. Like the architects of New Labour before them, William Hague and the Tory modernisers have taken the first, painful step: they have admitted defeat. Not just their electoral humiliation on May 1, but their larger defeat in the battle of ideas. In the leader's speech and throughout the week, the Conservative party has begun to accept that in one core area of belief their opponents were right and they were wrong.

For the New Labourites, surrender came in the economic argument. Modernisers forced the party to accept that the world had changed, that the old socialist dream of a high-taxing, high-spending economy had vanished, and that now the free market was sovereign. Mr Hague signalled — as Michael Portillo had done the day before — that the Tories have to undergo a similar retreat, this time on the social and cultural battlefield. Both men urged their party to accept that Britain has changed, arguing that if the Tories are to return to the mainstream they have to accept that not every Briton is white or male or married or straight.

What Mr Hague showed is a determination to march straight back to the centre ground of British politics, not to cede that golden electoral turf to Tony Blair. If he has his way, his party will not follow Labour's 1980s experience of a half-decade on the wilder edges of public opinion. Instead he is bent on refashioning his party until it is an even match for New Labour: Mr Blair promises "compassion with a hard edge", so Mr Hague is offering a hard edge with compassion.

But there are problems. For one thing, it is far from clear whether Mr Hague can take his party with him. It was striking how flat some of the key modernising lines fell at the Winter Gardens. When the leader explained that "compassion is not a bolt-on extra to Conservatism, it's at its very core," delegates listened politely — but in silence. When he welcomed black and Asian Britons, and spoke of celebrating diversity, the hall was slow to applaud. When he codedly referred to his admirably progressive record on gay rights, speaking of his "tolerance" and "understanding" of those who choose to lead their own lives their own way — silence again. Instead the delegates wanted to gobble up the old Tory red meat on Europe, the family and patriotism. Alarmingly, the loudest cheers greeted the riff against devolution — even though this was an argument the Tories had soundly lost and should not try to revive.

Perhaps the leader should not be faulted too severely if his foot soldiers are slow to follow. But Mr Hague can be blamed for not going far enough. If he meant gay rights, he should have said so — without feeling the need to sandwich his remarks between two sets of standard Toryspeak about family values. If he meant Neil Hamilton and Jonathan Aitken when he spoke about "greed and selfishness", he should have said so. Equally, he might have condemned Norman Tebbit to show that when he promises a racially inclusive party he means it. These are minor quibbles, though, with what was a highly successful conference for the Tories' new leader. A Labour party anxious to keep its hold of the centre ground should take careful note.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 19 1997

Be brave, Ireland, think the unthinkable

Fintan O'Toole argues that Dublin should follow the ANC's lead and rejoin the Commonwealth

MARY ROBINSON, in her last significant speech as president of Ireland, raised an idea that might excite the interest of the Commonwealth nations as they gather in Edinburgh next week.

Opening a summer school in August she asked her audience: "If somebody posed the question, 'Should Ireland rejoin the Commonwealth?' just think of your reaction." Such a thought was, she said, "a good way of assessing the insecurities we still have" after 75 years of Irish independence, "the lack of a firm sense of ourselves so that we cannot address that question without a great deal of hesitation and emotion".

As always with Mrs Robinson, a hard question was being posed in soft tones. This was not idle speculation — when she met the Commonwealth's secretary-general, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, in 1994, she had gone out of her way to praise the institution for its multi-racial and multi-cultural character, its commitment to negotiation and the rule of law, and its capacity to connect the developed and developing worlds.

Mrs Robinson knew well that her words would be seen for what they undoubtedly were — an attempt to place the unthinkable on the Irish political agenda.

The citizens of the Republic are proud of their independence and wary of what might be seen as a return to the Britannic fold. This is, moreover, hardly a good time for suggesting that anyone, let alone the Irish, would choose to be associated with the British monarchy.

Yet there are good reasons, both historical and contemporary, for reopening the question. The Commonwealth played a critical role in shaping modern Ireland, and independent Ireland played a vital part in shaping the contemporary Commonwealth.

At the Commonwealth Conference of 1930, the Irish Free State, together with Canada, did much to shape the organisation as a community of equal nations by establishing that British laws would not apply to the Dominions without their consent. That agreement, in turn, transformed the equivocal independence granted to Ireland in 1922 into a real sovereignty. Paradoxically, this freedom was expressed most dramatically in Ireland's 1948 decision to quit the Commonwealth.

There is, too, another, more intriguing historical paradox. It is often assumed that Ireland's withdrawal was a logical outcome of the advance of nationalism. But in fact there is good reason to believe that Eamon de Valera, for long the embodiment of hardline Irish republicanism, wanted to stay in.

In 1953, Winston Churchill asked de Valera: "If you had remained head of the Irish government, would you have taken the country out of the Commonwealth?" De Valera's answer was a firm "No". Frederick Boland, the leading Irish diplomat of the time, wrote that De Valera would have kept Ireland in the Commonwealth, while making it clear that Ireland recognised the British monarch only as its titular head.

And now, of course, the role of the monarchy in the Commonwealth has been diluted to a degree that goes well beyond even De Valera's demands. The Commonwealth is no longer the British Empire in drag. If the PLO can apply to join and the ANC can lead South Africa back to the moral centre of the organisation, it is hard to see how even the most militant Irish nationalist can persist in seeing it as a neo-imperial conspiracy.

De Valera's regret at Ireland's departure from the Commonwealth was perfectly consistent with his nationalism. By pulling out, the Irish government, theoretically committed to a united Ireland, deepened the divisions between North and South.

It should have been obvious even then that closer ties between the Republic and Northern Ireland would always need some way in which Northern Unionists could express British allegiance. And this is precisely why the Commonwealth question must be asked again.

The citizens of the Republic know that the current peace talks in Northern Ireland cannot reach agreement unless Unionists agree to recognise an "Irish dimension" formal, institutional connections between North and South. What they do not yet realise is that the reverse is also true. Nationalists have to recognise the "British dimension" formal, institutional links between Ireland and Britain. And this is where the idea of the Republic rejoining the Commonwealth becomes much more than a diverting subject for abstract debate.

A WILLINGNESS on the part of the Republic to discuss membership of the Commonwealth would be a convincing demonstration that Irish nationalists are prepared to do what they demand of Unionists: contemplate the previously unthinkable.

Conversely, if the Irish government simply dismisses the idea, as the current prime minister Bertie Ahern has tended to do, the message to Unionists is: "Do as we say, not as we do."

And the deeper truth is that the Northern Ireland conflict cannot be solved without a mutual recognition that Irishness and Britishness are not opposed, but intertwined, identities. Ireland and Britain patently share a language and a history. The relations between the two islands are too close, too deeply rooted, for either's existence to be imaginable without the other's.

When Ireland was a weak and resentful junior partner in the relationship, its people were understandably not too anxious to be reminded of their deep links with Britain. But the Republic no longer feels like John Bull's Other Island. It is economically successful and culturally confident. European Union membership has broken the economic dependence on Britain that outlived the ending of political dependence.

Last year, for the first time, GDP per capita in the Republic was higher than that in the UK. Ireland is, if anything, rather more self-assured, more sanguine about its place in the world, than contemporary Britain seems to be. These days, post-colonial angst belongs in the Mother Country, not the former colonies.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 19 1997

Le Monde

Dollar calls the tune in hard-up Cuba

Jean-Michel Caroit in Havana

AS THE Cuban vice-president, Carlos Lage, pointed out recently, Cuba is not China. It is a country where reforms are implemented at a slower pace, hampered as they are by an indecisive regime and the hostility of the United States.

Washington and Havana's stormy relationship has its paradoxes. The influential community of Cuban exiles in Florida, which constantly urges the US to tighten its embargo, is also the main source of Cuba's hard currency.

According to the United Nation's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Eclac), the volume of remittances from exiles amounted to $800 million in 1996 — more than Cuba's revenues from either sugar or tourism.

Thirty years after the death of Che Guevara, dollar-earning has become the revolution's watchword, though that is not something openly admitted by speakers at the Cuban Communist Party's Fifth Congress, which opened in Havana on October 8 in an atmosphere of economic gloom.

Whereas last year Lage was able to announce a healthy growth rate of 7.8 per cent, the economy slowed down appreciably this year. Most independent economic analysts reckon that Cuba will fail to achieve its official growth target of 4 per cent. The first half of the year was disappointing: the sugar harvest only just topped 4 million tonnes, which represented a shortfall of at least 200,000 tonnes over last year.

Even though tourism was little affected by the summer's wave of bomb attacks, it did not bring in as much hard currency as the Cuban government had hoped. Gross revenues, the only figures released by the authorities, do not represent a true picture, as allowances have to be made for the cost of importing a sizeable proportion of the food and equipment required, and for a major slice of air transport costs.

In June, tourist facilities were subjected to a detailed audit under the supervision of Lage himself. The aim was to increase "net hard currency" revenues and combat corruption in a sector where there is fierce competition for jobs because of the opportunity they provide of getting tipped in dollars.

"At the end of last year, the Cuban leaders were surprised to see that growth had cost them a lot of hard currency as a result of a sharp increase in imports. So they had to slam on the brakes," says a French investor.

Cuba's higher oil bill and dwindling sugar revenues, which serve as security for loans, have this year brought the country to the brink of bankruptcy. Creditors had no choice but to agree to extend payment schedules. Meanwhile the authorities have cut back imports and scraped together as many dollars as they could from enterprises doing business with foreign companies.

"Everything belongs to the state," says the representative of a leading European company. "They haven't sold many of their assets yet and still have some leeway if things really come to the crunch." Privatisation remains anathema.

A "hard currency committee" made up of senior officials in the main economic ministries and chaired by Lage meets once or twice a week. "All inflows of hard currency are centralised," says a foreign businessman.

A European diplomat says: "The extreme centralisation which enabled Cuba to withstand the shock of the Soviet Union's demise and a sudden decline in GNP has its limitations." Lage has on several occasions expressed concern about the low productivity of Cuban enterprises.

The economy minister, José Luis Rodriguez, says that an improvement in the efficiency of state-owned enterprises over the next few years will be one of the key recommendations of the current congress. But it would seem that the legalisation of small and medium-sized companies, which has been blocked for years by "orthodox" communists, is not on the cards.

The co-existence of a dollar economy alongside a peso economy is proving another headache for the Cuban government. Lage, a doctor by training, has not come up with a cure for this two-track system, which is deepening the gulf between dollar holders and the majority of the population, who find it increasingly hard to survive on their pesos.



Light work: Workers hang lights on a giant image of Che Guevara's face in Havana in the run-up to the party congress PHOTO: JOES CAVARETTA

As an employer, the state stands to gain from the system: wage-earners are invoiced to foreign investors in dollars and paid in pesos at the official rate of one dollar to the peso — or 20 times less than the actual exchange rate.

"With two salaries and a ration card, a family can live on its pesos for 15-20 days. After that, it just has to find some way of coping," says Arturo, a communist activist whose salary of 260 pesos ($13) per month is slightly above the average of 206 pesos.

"Coping" means trying to get hold of dollars. The quest for greenbacks has created what one foreign resident of Havana describes as a situation where "social relations have become excessively mercenary". Anything goes, from prostitution to petty swindling, in the scramble to relieve foreign visitors of their currency.

The "social indiscipline" denounced by the official press takes the form of rampant corruption. The Cubans' traditional generosity and hospitality are gradually being replaced by more self-interested attitudes.

"Last year's strong growth only reinforced our leaders' inertia," says Aurelio Alonso, a sociologist. "The slowdown in growth may prompt them to have another think about pursuing the process of change."

In the past few years, the pressure of events has proved a more effective factor of change than congress debates. In 1991, for example, the Fourth Congress refused to legalise farmers' free markets. They saw the light of day three years later, in the wake of the "rafters' crisis" of the summer of 1994, when more than 30,000 Cubans fled to the coasts of Florida.

(October 9)

Sweden takes slow road to the euro

Bruno Peltier in Stockholm

SWEDEN'S Social-Democratic prime minister, Göran Persson, has confirmed in a bill put before parliament on October 10 that his country will not be in the first wave of nations joining European Monetary Union (EMU) in January 1999. This goes against Sweden's pledge, when it joined the European Union in 1995, to accept the principles of the Maastricht treaty. But Persson knows how unpopular the euro is in Sweden, especially among his own supporters.

The two opposition parties, the conservative Moderates and the Liberals, who had hoped to persuade the Swedes to join EMU from the start, abandoned the idea this week and joined those who have been calling for a referendum on the issue.

The leader of the Moderates, Carl Bildt, thinks this should take place at the same time as the European elections, in June 1999. The prime minister, sensing a political manoeuvre, thinks that would be too soon after the start of EMU.

But, as Persson hinted in Brussels at the end of September, the government could well reassess the situation sooner than expected were the British to do a U-turn on the issue. What Persson wants to ensure is that the euro does not become a key issue in the run-up to the general elections in September 1998.

With a view to winning that poll, Persson has brought out his bag of welfare sweeteners in recent weeks. He will be giving away 9 billion crowns ($120 million) in increased unemployment and sickness benefits and family allowances. That should help to reassure voters worried by Sweden's rising unemployment rate. This year it is expected to be 8.4 per cent of the working population. Persson had promised to bring it down to 4 per cent by 2000.

Bildt's Moderates have managed to make political capital out of this government failure, and are running neck and neck with the Social Democrats in the opinion polls. Bildt hopes to bring the small Centre party into his fold by election time. In a bid to give itself an independent image during the campaign, the Centre party has said it will no longer play ball with the government.

Persson hopes to woo the party back after the election and is prepared to pay the price — the closing down of two of Sweden's 12 nuclear reactors by the summer of 2001.

It is easy for Persson to show that he has improved public finances. The 1997 budget deficit will not exceed 1.9 per cent of GDP. Growth is expected to be 2.3 per cent and inflation 1.1 per cent. Better than that, the government expects to balance its books in 1998, and then produce a surplus of 0.5 per cent of GDP in 1999 and of 1.5 per cent in 2000.

That at least was what the finance minister forecast when he presented his draft 1998 budget last month. In fact Sweden, should come close to meeting all the Maastricht criteria for the single currency — only its public debt is higher than the permitted threshold.

(October 10)

A last long look at Vichy

EDITORIAL

FROM 1940 to 1944, the French state kept files on all Jews living in France, whether foreign or French-born, excluded them from society and divested them of their property. It organised the arrest and internment of tens of thousands of Jews, before handing them over to the Nazis, who sped them on their way to concentration camps from which there was no return.

It took 50 years for a French president, Jacques Chirac, to recognise that fact officially, in the course of a ceremony in July 1995 in memory of those rounded up at the Vel' d'Hiv stadium in Paris in 1942.

More than two years after Chirac's speech on that occasion, the trial has opened of Maurice Papon, who, when he was a senior official at the prefecture in Bordeaux, organised the arrest of Jews and their transfer to the Paris suburb of Drancy, the antechamber of the death camps.

It is only right that a person suspected of having been one of several French accessories to the Final Solution should be brought to trial. Invested with the full authority of state, Papon arrested and loaded on to trains men, women, old people and children whose fate could not have been in any doubt. No one in good faith could have had any illusions about what the arrest of whole families meant.

There were some ordinary policemen who warned potential victims that they were on their list of people to be rounded up and persuaded them to flee. Papon possessed neither their compassion nor the self-respect he needed to resign from his post rather than execute dishonourable orders.

It is healthy, too, that the political and judicial reluctance to bring Papon to court has been overcome. The efforts made by the former president François Mitterrand to slow down the wheels of justice were effective in enabling other men, such as former police chief René Bousquet, to escape trial.

Following the trial of the former SS officer Klaus Barbie in Lyon and that of the former Vichy militia leader Paul Touvier in Versailles, the Bordeaux trial is the third and last occasion that someone accused of committing crimes against humanity during the Occupation has been brought to trial.

It is the only trial involving an official of the French state. Irrespective of the sentence passed on Papon, this is the last time that the true nature of the Vichy regime can be scrutinised with the help of testimony and documentary evidence.

Neither the action of the Resistance nor the prestige of the republic will be diminished by the trial. On the contrary, light shed on the monstrous behaviour of the Pétain regime can only bring greater respect for the courage of all those who opposed it and serve as a reminder of the kind of crimes that are committed when republican principles are trampled on.

(October 8)

A true body of work

CONTEMPORARY music often reaches the public only in recorded form, and records therefore have a key bearing on a composer's reputation, *writes Pierre Gervasoni*.

The dream of any living composer is to leave to posterity a corpus of recorded works that is totally faithful to the artist's intentions. Sony will make that dream come true for the Hungarian-born composer György Ligeti at the end of next year, when he will be 75.

Born in Transylvania in 1923, Ligeti left Hungary shortly after the beginning of the 1956 uprising and settled in Cologne, where he was welcomed by fellow composer Karlheinz Stockhausen and underwent the influence of Pierre Boulez, Luciano Berio and Mauricio Kagel.

In 1959, Ligeti moved to Vienna and eight years later took out Austrian nationality. From 1959-72 he took part in the Darmstadt summer school, and has since then divided his time between Hamburg, where he taught until 1989, and Vienna.

By the end of 1998, Sony will have published what is to all intents and purposes the "authorised" recordings of Ligeti's works under the supervision of the Finnish composer and conductor Esa Pekka Salonen. The first six of the 12 CDs, which will contain recordings of almost all Ligeti's works (one or two pieces composed when he was still in Hungary have been left out), have already appeared.

The first volume contains a solid account of Ligeti's string quartets by the Arditti Quartet and a fine little-known piece with Magyar overtones, Ballade And Dance For Two Violins, which he composed when he was a young man.

The second CD, A Cappella Choral Works, centres on the historic Lux Aeterna, and reflects the composer's musical curiosity and sensitivity. Volume three, Works For Piano, is the finest in the series, and offers a perfect introduction to Ligeti's music for anyone unfamiliar with it. Pierre-Laurent Aimard is the talented performer-cum-analyst of Ligeti's 15 studies for piano.

The fourth CD is equally successful. In it, Salonen and the King's Singers give a pertinent account of the Nonsense Madrigals. The last two volumes throw new light on Ligeti's keyboard works, both in their original version (piano, harpsichord and organ) and as transcribed for mechanical instruments such as Pierre Charial's barrel organ.

(September 27)

Ice maiden delivers the goods

Stéphane Davet

THE Icelandic pop singer and composer Björk has long gone her own wilful way without worrying about breaking taboos. Eccentricity has become the norm with her. Few musicians on the pop scene have allowed themselves such freedom to combine different forms and create such a personal avant-garde world as hers.

Her first two solo albums, Debut and Post, contained songs where a texture of cabaret sounds, swing, pop tunes and subdued house music was shot through with hints of classical music and oriental landscapes. Curiously, her futuristic and uncompromising songs were hugely successful with the public.

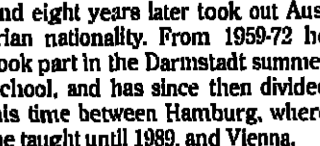
The spontaneity and mischievous charisma of the "techno elf", and her knack of getting the biggest names in the pop business to work with her, turned Björk into the "with-it" icon of the nineties.

But behind her success there lurked a pitfall into which she almost fell. In the past year, her name has featured more often in the gossip columns of newspapers than in their pop sections: a fan sent her a letter bomb (which was intercepted), then videoed his own suicide; she was briefly married to and stormily divorced from Goldie, the cult DJ of the jungle scene; she attacked a woman reporter who was pestering her at an airport.

It was clearly time for Björk to stand back and take stock of her life. Her third album, Homogenic, is the exciting product of her retreat from the public eye. Although Björk is shown on the CD cover decked out as a cyber-oriental princess by the extravagant Alexander McQueen, she has shorn her songs of many of the gimmicks she picked up when living in London.

In an interview in the pop weekly Les Inrockuptibles, Björk says she was determined to make an "organic" record: "The nervous system is represented by the violins, the lungs and oxygen by the voice, and the heart by the rhythm."

That formula is quintessentially present in the first four numbers of the album, which possess a magical perfection. In them, electronic sounds act as an electrocardiogram. They have an uneven, raw beat stripped of the kind of seductive trimmings that get people dancing. A curiously anatomical sensuality emerges from the machine. The synthesiser throbs beneath a melancholy flow of strings.



Björk: fully expressed emotions PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID HARRISON

To allow her emotions to express themselves fully, Björk asked the Brazilian composer/arranger, Eumir Deodato, to conduct the Icelandic String Octet. Deodato, who used to accompany Astrud Gilberto, made a name for himself with his arrangements for Frank Sinatra, Roberta Flack and Aretha Franklin, and his adaptation of Richard Strauss's Also Sprach Zarathustra for the soundtrack of the film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

The sombre majesty of Björk's soaring cinematic flights in the first four numbers, Hunter, Joga, Unravel and Bachelorette, probably owe much to Deodato. In them the maverick Icelander's voice floats above a combination of post-modern harmonies and futuristic rhythms.

She is possessed by what she calls these "emotional landscapes", and allows herself to be swept along by a torrent of romantic supplication. She seems to invent a new form of soul music with its own brand of pathos, and her voice unburdens itself, both caressing and lacerating the listener. Nostalgic, poignant and weird, these songs are probably the finest that Björk has ever recorded.

The inspired intensity of the four "torch songs" is followed by quieter moments. Violins and melody move into the background. Techno, trip hop and hip hop musicians (LFO's Mark Bell, Howie B and Wu-Tang Clan's RZA respectively) muscle in on the act, smash Deodato's baton, so to speak, and get their synthesisers to hiss and grate.

Here again, Björk aims for austerity. The background of electronic sounds that evoke tachycardia one moment, and the grinding of factory machinery the next, is unlikely to wow those on the dance floor.

Björk's voice, now more cerebral, is distorted and becomes as jagged as the crater of a volcano, as though she were trying to reach into the most tortuous recesses of her being. It is still a fascinating performance, though less moving than the overwhelming first four numbers. Yet Björk remains unique.

Homogenic, 1 CD, One Little Indian 539 178-2

(September 20)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY October 19 1997

Soul searcher

Avant-garde composer György Ligeti talks to **Pierre Gervasoni**

THE fact you left Hungary in 1956 had a crucial bearing on your career as a composer. Can you imagine what kind of music you might have written had you stayed?

Yes. Pieces like Apparitions or Atmosphères, which I composed in Cologne and Vienna, were affected by my discovery of Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez. So anything I might have written without their influence, by staying behind in Budapest, would of course have been different.

But not all that different, because in the summer of 1956, before leaving Hungary, I had already written Visions, a piece for orchestra which is a sort of more primitive version of the first movement of Apparitions. The emphasis on chromatic clusters and very dense textures was already a personal characteristic of mine.

My musical development in Hungary might have been much the same, except that it would have taken longer, as it did for György Kurtag, with whom I had a great deal in common.

Do you still feel you have a Hungarian identity?

My mother tongue in Hungarian. I have no nationalist feelings. I'm not tied to Hungary in any patriotic way, but I do have links through the language, poetry and literary culture.

But in other respects my culture is European. In Japan, Indochina and Indonesia a great indigenous culture has existed for thousands of years. In Europe, it's only the languages that are different. Culture is technology.

In a 1985 article you advocated a contemporary modernism that would be neither "retro" out of nostalgia for tonality, nor academic out of submissiveness to a fossilised post-serial avant-garde. Is a modernism of that kind still relevant?

Yes. You can still find composers who compose like Mahler or Vivaldi, or who even write meditations in the style of Pérotin. However, I don't think it's a good idea to pursue a strict avant-garde line.

I hate scores that are too elaborate, where you're supposed to admire the writing more than the music. For me, music is an acoustic phenomenon, and the only purpose of the score is to communicate with the performers.

My own work has naturally evolved over the past 10 years because, among other things, I have increased my knowledge in the scientific and ethno-musicological areas that have long provided me with inspiration. Having said that, I'm really a dilettante who is interested in all the sciences . . . and the humanities.

I soak up everything like a sponge. But it can't be said I follow a model of any kind . . . Take, for example, the branch of mathematics which defines cellular automata whose configurations develop like a living organism. I'm interested in the theory, but not in applying it directly.

You've been looking for an alternative to the equal temperament system since the beginning of the eighties. How successful have you been?

I looked into the question well before then, particularly in Re[...]cations. The Double Violin Co[n]certo, too, is microtonal. I [wa]s greatly influenced by Harry Part[ch] when I stayed in California 25 years ago, and I even had a chance to p[lay] on his instruments.

I try as hard as I can to avoid the equal division of the octave into [1]2 semitones, which was useful for t[he] tonal system. We now have oth[er] possibilities, a continuum of colo[urs] of the kind that Ferruccio Bu[soni] dreamt of.

The Double Violin Concerto seemed to mark a step in that di[rection], notably in its use of oca[ri]nas and slide flutes. Do you plan to take that experiment further?

Certainly in my chamber mu[sic]. In my Viola Sonata, whose fi[rst] performance was given by Tab[ea] Zimmermann, you have a fi[rst] movement — which I compo[sed] with beating heart — where var[ious] microtonal deviations correspo[nd]ing to the natural harmonic sp[ec]trum are called for.

The movement is, for examp[le], based on the harmonics of F. B[ut] the viola has no F string, so the p[er]former has to produce the harm[on]ies of F by playing normally on [the] C string and controlling the ac[cu]racy of his or her intonation by [ear]. In a sense, it means using ima[gi]nary strings. I'd like to extend th[ese] experiments to the string quart[et].

You have just made major revisions to Le Grand Macabre, which was put on at last summer's Salzburg Festival and can be seen in Paris next February. Opera, which used to be sneere[d] at 20 years ago, is now attractin[g] composers again. Is that because it allows them to play a more prominent social role?

I don't think so. A social ro[le is] not something I can quite visual[ise]. Anything that I might think can [...] be an illusion. The reality of soci[ety] cannot be influenced by wha[t I] think. That's why I avoid all forms [of] utopia. I don't think that when ar[tists] create they ask themselves whe[ther] people need them or not. I my[self] create because I need to do so.

In an interview 10 years ago, you said it was only normal that one generation should be hostile to fathers and move closer to grand fathers. You seem to be admired by young composers from very different backgrounds. Does this mean that you are now regarded as a "grandfather"?

I'm now an old man, but I've k[ept] a form of curiosity intact. I have [never] gone along the road that lead[s to] cultivating one's own greatness, [or] as some people cultivate their o[wn] style. I'm never happy with wha[t I] do. I'm always searching.

Isn't it rather risky to call oneself into question all the time?

You can't get anywhere with[out] taking risks. You remain in a st[ate of] mediocrity. When I left Hungar[y I] had no idea what was going to hap[pen] — I might have been shot whe[n] I reached the border.

(September 27)

Failed Killing Stirs Few Moral Doubts

Barton Gellman in Jerusalem

IN THE national mortification over a failed assassination attempt in Jordan, Israelis are dissecting every tactical, technical and procedural flaw in the affair. Strikingly absent from the debate, however, is a question that might be expected elsewhere: Should the government be in the business of dispatching assassins to kill its enemies abroad?

For Israeli Jews, profoundly insecure still in their 50th year of statehood, the answer appears to be self-evident. No mainstream politician or columnist, from right to farthest left, has questioned Israel's entitlement to hunt down accused terrorists such as Khalid Mashaal, the chief of the militant Islamic group Hamas' political bureau in Amman, Jordan.

That is unusual among democracies with roots in the Western traditions of individual rights and the rule of law. In England, allegations of a shoot-to-kill policy by British troops against the Irish Republican Army caused a scandal in the mid-1980s. In the United States, the backlash against CIA abuses unearthed by the Church Committee led to a legal ban on assassinations in 1976.

Israeli law not only sanctions assassination but has regularized it to some extent. At roughly the time that the U.S. Congress passed the assassination ban, then-Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir set up twin committees — a forum of secret service chiefs known by its Hebrew acronym, Varash, and a panel of government ministers known as the X Committee — to vet candidates for assassination by the Mossad, the country's espionage agency.

What has aroused debate in Israel is not the September 25 attempt to poison Mashaal but rather its spectacular failure. To obtain the freedom of two captured Mossad agents, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to provide the antidote for the nerve agent that otherwise would have killed Mashaal within two days. Relations chilled with Jordan and with Canada, whose forged passports the Mossad agents had carried. Hamas, the "snake" whose "head" Israeli officials said they had been trying to cut off, emerged far stronger when Netanyahu was forced to release its founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, from an Israeli prison.

One measure of the Israeli political dialogue — and the assumptions shared by those who take part in it — was a radio interview given by Alex Lubotsky, a member of parliament from the middle-of-the-road Third Way party. The issue that he was addressing was not whether Israel should engage in assassinations, but whether it should do so in friendly countries such as Jordan.

"It's very easy to say you shouldn't do it in countries with which we have relations," Lubotsky said. "The first commitment of a government is to the security of its people. Unfortunately we don't live in a normal country, and we don't live in a normal region."

Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan, in a long conversation last week full of bewilderment and barely suppressed rage, put it differently. The Jewish state's tradition of glorifying covert killing, he said, "is a part of Israel's not wanting to become a country that is part of the region."

"For a country that is besieged, taking out figures in other countries who are actively involved in military activities against you, obviously I can see that that is regarded as gallant among the general public," Hassan said.

But Israel, he said, must grow out of that view if it wishes to replace its defiant isolation with normalized, peaceful relations with its neighbors.

"If you expect transparent, legally binding peace treaties with countries in the region, then clearly you can't move into your neighbor's turf, a country that entertains open relations with you . . . and destroy the credibility of that country by using strong-arm methods," Hassan said.

Israelis argue that they are locked in a life-or-death struggle and have no practical choice of tools. Against hostile governments, officials said, they have other means of pressure and do not resort to assassination. But terrorists, among whom the Israelis count Hamas and, at one time, the Palestine Liberation Organization, can be combated only in kind.



As a result of its botched assassination attempt in Jordan, Israel had to concede the release of the Hamas leader, Ahmed Yassin

Netanyahu, in his only televised defense of the assassination mission, said the alternative to "brave decisions" like the one to target Mashaal is to heed "frightened, alarmed voices . . . which are explaining why we must sit with our hands tied when facing these murderers."

"It's the old-time religion — an eye for an eye," said a senior American diplomat. "It's very biblical, and a basic value of post-Holocaust Jews."

Netanyahu's director of communications and policy planning, David Bar-Illan, defended the prime minister's decision on Mashaal by saying, "He did what every other prime minister would have done."

Bar-Illan said he disagreed with references by President Clinton and State Department spokesman James P. Rubin to "political assassination." "We don't consider this political assassination," he said.

What Israelis are debating instead are the mechanics of the assassination attempt and the calibration of political risk. Eitan Rabin, one of Israel's leading military writers, said the "clarification committee" investigating the affair is asking such questions as whether Netanyahu forced the assignment on Mossad chief Dani Yatom, whether the location of the hit in Jordan was unavoidable and whether the right people were chosen for the mission.

Among Israelis, the only fundamental critics of assassination as policy are its Arab citizens.

Abdul Wahab Darawshe, a member of parliament and leader of the Arab Democratic Party, linked Israel's use of extrajudicial killing to a value system that places "the security needs of Israel over everything. It's the only value they respect. Under the rubric of security they can allow themselves to do everything."

East Congo Back in Grip of Violence

Lynne Duke in Goma

BANAMWANA MPIMUYE and his seven children stood forlorn on a roadside, part of a band of 30 ethnic Tutsi farmers driven out of the hills near Masisi about 35 miles northwest of here. With fresh gashes on their bodies that they said came from attackers, the group told of hiding in the forest for a week.

Banamwana is among thousands of people who have been displaced violently in this war-torn region recently, as bitter ethnic violence — tamped down after new Congo leader Laurent Kabila seized control of the country earlier this year — begins to flare anew.

Perhaps most affected are Tutsis, a minority who are closely identified with Kabila's successful rebellion and his new government — and who have suffered the effects of a kind of ethnic backlash. At least 12,000 Tutsis from Congo have sought safety across the border in Rwanda, where Tutsis also are in the minority but have control of the government.

A year after Kabila started his campaign to oust veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko, this eastern region where the war began is gripped by ethnic extremism of the same kind that precipitated Kabila's rebellion.

In this region along Lake Kivu, enmity between ethnic groups has seethed and flared for years, rendering the area ungovernable except by Kabila's military. The government has established a Commission of Pacification to try to change hearts and minds, and maintains that reports of new ethnic violence are exaggerated. But local residents, aid workers and regional analysts disagree.

"Extremism is mounting and mounting, and they fear that there might be another war," said Dufina Tabu, head of a volunteer association that preaches ethnic tolerance.

From July to September, conflicts flared from Goma, Masisi and Walikale in the north to Bukavu, Uvira and Fizi in the south. Scores of villages were destroyed, hundreds of people were killed and thousands of Tutsis fled to Rwanda. Though the violence has abated in recent weeks, many here believe this is only a lull.

"We will be fighting here for many, many years to come," said a local man, Jean Pierre, who opposes the Tutsi presence here.

Tutsis from Congo and Rwanda initiated and led the Kabila rebellion, which in its early stages was essentially a fight to protect Tutsis on both sides of the border from attacks by other ethnic groups. After scoring a series of early victories, the rebellion grew into a broader regional military alliance that swept through the entire country and, in May, toppled Mobutu, who died last month.

The Tutsis here in Congo now face the wrath of several militia forces. In North Kivu Province there are at least three such groups: the Mai Mai, predominantly of the Hunde tribe; the Combatants, made up of members of the Hutu tribe, who form the majority in Rwanda; and remnants of the Rwandan Hutu militia forces known as the Interahamwe.

A Most-Favored Policy on China

COMMENT
Stephen S. Rosenfeld

OF ALL the large, open questions of American foreign policy, easily the largest is China: how to ensure that its remarkable development produces a country that can be brought into an international system, one that will not be free of tension but will be run by agreed rules. The question will get an early testing when President Jiang Zemin arrives in Washington at the end of the month for the first Chinese-American summit in nearly a decade.

The Clinton administration, it appears, will be ready for him. In this instance, anyway, it has the elements of a coherent policy in place, and it has begun explaining its expectations for its guest.

True, it's not clear exactly what will be on President Jiang's mind. Recent American visitors to Beijing have found some Chinese cheerfully anticipating restoration of the Sino-American normalization broken off by the Chinese Communist massacre of democracy demonstrators at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Other, more apprehensive Chinese seem to fear the United States is basically concerned to check their country's surging growth and power.

On the American side, however, the administration is already claiming no small breakthrough. Though the daily static sometimes conceals it, the administration has won a substantial indication of bipartisan support that it hopes will sustain its chosen China policy through the ups and downs sure to come.

The particular issue people have brawled over most is whether or not the bestowal of normal trade terms (mislabeled as "most-favored-nation," or MFN, trading status) should be linked to Beijing's performance on human rights.

The human rights wars continue, and should as long as Chinese abuses go on. But in the annual MFN battle this year, White House national security adviser Samuel Berger now notes, the president's certification of China as tradeworthy was sustained by 80 votes in the Republican House and did not even come up for a vote in the Senate. You could say the president is trying to have a strong human rights emphasis and a strong trade policy, and Congress is prepared to let him try it both ways.

The American debate on engagement is over, says Berger, though argument continues on "priorities" — human rights, Tibet, trade, nonproliferation and so on. He is at pains to avoid indicating which of these perennially contentious items matters most to the United States, presumably for fear of having to choose among them.

The American policy as now established plays to the tremendous political investment the Chinese Communist leadership has made in continued economic growth. This investment asks from China not just a regard for the agreed terms of international trade but a general concern for good relations with countries like the United States. Those countries are its markets and its sources of investment and much else, and will be for a time extending far into the future.

We can't contain, isolate or turn our backs on China, Berger says; if we treat China like an enemy, we'll make it an enemy. Hence the administration's acceptance of "strategic dialogue" with Beijing. Berger is reluctant to say the dialogue will lead to the ultimate and ambitious end stage of a strategic "partnership." But meanwhile the commitment to strategic "dialogue" amounts to an acknowledgment of China's heavyweight status.

China's part remains, Berger makes clear, to honor the international rules of conduct in economic and political affairs alike.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
October 19 1997

The Clintons pay their respects at Simon Bolivar's burial place in Caracas on Monday PHOTO: RICK WILKING

First Lady Ups Her Agenda

Peter Baker at Miraflores Locks, Panama Canal

AS THE 33,000-ton South Korean cargo ship inched its way through this storied passageway between the oceans, the administrator called upon Hillary Rodham Clinton to turn the lever that opens the gates. Impressed by her performance, he offered her a job.

"I'm your person," she answered cheerfully. "Everybody's always asking what I'm going to do when my husband's no longer president. I have found my calling!"

Actually, the more immediate question these days is what she will do not when her husband leaves the White House but now that her daughter is gone. And the answer is plenty. With 17-year-old Chelsea living across the continent at Stanford University, the first lady is re-entering the public policy arena with a burst of activity, from a new domestic campaign for better child care to a renewed international crusade for women's rights.

Her trip here last week to meet with the hemisphere's other first ladies and visit the Panama Canal was just an opener. Last Saturday she headed back to Latin America, this time with President Clinton. Later this month, she will hop over to Ireland, Northern Ireland and England for a few days, and then next month she takes off on a 10-day journey through "the Stans," as her staff calls Central Asian republics such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. And laced through all this will be domestic trips to New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Aides estimate with perhaps only a touch of exaggeration that Clinton will spend just two or three nights at the White House in the next month or so. If that seems like the schedule of someone avoiding the empty nest at home, that is no accident.

"You can't know it's empty," the first lady said, "if you're not there."

In an interview aboard her military jet on the way home last week, Clinton talked about her daughter's absence, her own upcoming 50th birthday, her husband's new hearing aids and their plans for life after the White House. The notoriously media-wary first lady opened up with six reporters in a way she rarely does on the record, sharing stories, making jokes and revealing a human side that normally remains hidden behind a far cooler public persona.

Her energies are focused on last week's gathering of first ladies, where she pressed her Latin American counterparts to push for more participation by women in their emerging democracies, and the upcoming White House conference on child care, where she will explore ideas including a national registry of those who watch children professionally.

While she said she is not given to much birthday-inspired introspection about her life, it was clear that she and the president, who celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary last weekend, have thought about what they want to do after his term ends in January 2001.

For all the speculation about a move to California or Illinois, or even Martha's Vineyard, Clinton said they plan to return to Arkansas, although she suggested that may only be a home base.

Her husband will be one of the youngest ex-presidents and she recalled that Theodore Roosevelt "did so many things" after leaving office at 50. However, she made a face when reminded that one of those things was an unsuccessful comeback try for the presidency. She pointed out with seeming satisfaction that the Constitution now precludes such an option for Bill Clinton.

Still, she acknowledged that leaving the White House will be tough for her husband. Already, she said, he is wistful about the approaching end of his administration — never mind that it is three years away.

"My husband's a very nostalgic and philosophical man," the first lady said. "When I first met him, he was nostalgic about his boyhood in Arkansas. He just has a wonderful capacity for taking in every experience and savoring it. Now he realizes that he's got fewer years ahead of him in the White House than behind him. And so he's thinking, 'Maybe this is the last time I'll do this,' or, 'I really should enjoy this because I don't know if that'll happen again,'" she said. "I'm not there yet. But I see that he is. He's really relishing it."

'Asian Values' Devalued Along With Currencies

OPINION
Jim Hoagland

MONEY talks in economically vibrant America. But money weeps and moans in Southeast Asia today, sobbing out a tale of currency convulsions and investor anxiety that roils markets and political futures in that region and to some extent globally.

The Indonesian rupiah has fallen 40 percent in value since June. Malaysia's ringgit and stock market have bounced and wobbled, declining by up to 20 percent in recent weeks. The Thai baht has been pulverized by poor management and market forces, and has been wheeled into the intensive care unit of international finance. Across Asia, bountiful boom is turning to bitter bust.

These abrupt changes impose heavy new burdens on the region's inhabitants. Indonesia now owes 40 percent more on its dollar-denominated foreign debt of $100 billion than it did four months ago. Thailand has been granted conditional bailout loans from the International Monetary Fund, which invariably call for austerity leading to financial pain and social unrest. Malaysia has had to postpone grandiose, job-providing construction projects.

Does this matter to others, and specifically to Americans, who remember Richard Nixon telling aides on Watergate tapes that he did not give a whit about the Italian lira? It does. And it matters most of all how the international financial system responds to an Asian crisis of market mechanisms and human values.

The baht, rupiah and other monies are not the only casualties of this decade's third great currency upheaval (Britain, 1992; Mexico, 1994). Just as sharply devalued are the political hubris and racial conceit known under the catch phrase "Asian values."

This pseudo-ideology has been championed by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia and senior leader Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore to explain why their subjects could so avidly adopt Western material standards and financial systems without supposedly being interested in the "Western" political ideals of democracy, the dignity of the individual and the rights of free speech and assembly.

Mahathir, Lee, China's rulers and their friends abroad have used the argument to drop a curtain between East and West, and between rulers and subjects. In order to get ahead financially, Asian workers had to be content with traditional, i.e., authoritarian, political and social structures.

Mahathir's savage reaction to nervous foreign investors pulling money out of Malaysia's stock market and currency funds has exposed the racist nature of his political argument. He has denounced George Soros and other "foreign financiers" for trying to destroy Malaysia as punishment for being too uppity.

"I say openly these people are racists," Mahathir said in Kuala Lumpur after making a pointed if less inflammatory version of this argument in Hong Kong during the annual World Bank-International Monetary Fund meeting last month. "They are not happy to see us prosper. They say we grow too fast; they plan to make us poor."

Mahathir and the others seek to hide the self-inflicted nature of their wounds. Authoritarian Indonesia and brash, nouveau riche Thailand, outwardly so different in their political systems, are paying the price for the all-too-similar cronyism and corruption fostered by those systems, which kept foreign and domestic investors in the dark on key debt and currency-reserve data as the crisis approached.

Those investors and the bankers now clamor for a new international bailout fund for this and future upheavals. Japan's finance minister has floated the idea of a $100 billion regional safety net. President Clinton's money aides, not having the luxury of being witless about the rupiah, are huddling electronically with other financial wizards in the Group of Seven to figure out how to cope with Asia's monetary whirlwind. They must not overlook the self-inflicted nature of the problems of the baht, rupiah, ringgit and the others.

Asia's political structures are already *too* interconnected with business and finance. They need the transparency and guardrails that democratic freedoms bring with them, in the West and in countries in the East such as Japan and South Korea.

Setting up a new fund even more vulnerable to blackmail by the Mahathirs of Asia is an invitation for more corruption, more investor disregard of risk, and more upheaval. The wizards should have no trouble standing together against this proposal.

Cubans Gather to Honor Guevara

Serge F. Kovaleski in Havana

THESE ARE times of extreme hardship in Cuba. And for Carmen Almeida, the photo image that hangs in her bedroom of revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara lying dead, his lifeless eyes staring at the heavens, heartens her as she deals with the food rations, power outages and endless waits for buses that are the withering rituals of her existence.

"In Che, I have found a kind of god because he embodies such sacrifice, the ultimate sacrifice, which was death. When I seek inspiration to go on, this is what I see in his corpse," the 33-year-old teacher said. "In this period of our history, when we are facing a tough economic crisis, we need to follow his principles of struggle and hope. We need the strength of Che."

In one of the world's most closed political systems and few remaining socialist economies, Guevara remains a potent symbol of hope and unity — one that the government has tirelessly exploited in the past year.

The importance of Guevara's legacy to so many Cubans was played out last Saturday as hundreds of thousands of people such as Almeida descended on Revolution Square here in an emotional outpouring to pay homage to the guerrilla icon, who fought alongside Fidel Castro to topple dictator Fulgencio Batista and bring communism to this island nation four decades ago. Music praising the doctor-turned-rebel was piped through large speakers as admirers hoisted Cuban flags and banners emblazoned with portraits of Guevara and revolutioary slogans.

Under a towering steel mural depicting the Argentine-born revolutionary with his customary flowing hair, beard and beret, throngs of people endured long lines to briefly pass by the boxes holding remains of Guevara and six of his comrades in arms as they lay in state. The rebels were captured and executed in a mountain hamlet in Bolivia in 1967 while trying to export revolution there and elsewhere in South America.

All the remains will be moved to a recently completed mausoleum in Che Guevara Square in the central town of Santa Clara, the site of the decisive battle led by Guevara that would overthrow Batista's regime.

After Guevara's body disappeared following his death at the age of 39, some of his bones were discovered by a forensic team in a secret Bolivian grave and returned to Cuba in July, setting the stage for an elaborate state commemoration of the "30th Anniversary of the Death in Combat of the Heroic Guerrilla and His Comrades" that was inaugurated last Saturday and will culminate on Friday when the remains are interred.

President Castro has used Guevara's stature as a national symbol to his advantage. He opened the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party on the anniversary of the rebel's capture and closed the gathering on the eve of the opening of the commemoration.

Throughout the city, Che memorabilia, including T-shirts, berets, statuettes and ash trays have been on sale, while worldwide, books and movies about the revolutionary's life have become a mini-industry. In a news conference last week, Guevara's daughter, Aleida Guevara March, said, "There are many opportunists who are exploiting an image and that of course is bothersome. But concerning the young men and women who are wearing shirts with his image, we think it means something to them that he can stay with them — and that is good."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Senegal Separatist Rebellion Flares Anew

James Rupert in Ziguinchor

AS THE rainy season nears its end, this stretch of coastal West Africa is bursting with green. The Casamance River meanders across a plain of mangrove, banana and palm forests, rice paddies and village garden plots.

But the vision of Eden darkens. Around many villages at Senegal's southern edge, the green consists of weeds creeping over abandoned fields and paths. Hamlets and rural markets stand lifeless, except for Senegalese soldiers at foxholes and guard posts, who peer into the vegetation for signs of an enemy.

An episodic, 15-year-old rebellion in the Casamance region — led by anonymous commandants, Paris-based intellectuals and an aged Catholic priest — has flared anew in the past month. As before, the fighting has deepened political and economic uncertainty in Senegal, one of West Africa's most stable countries.

Some Senegalese worry over signs that the war, while small, is becoming more dangerous.

The rebels began fighting in 1982 with arrows, but have graduated to automatic rifles — and this time, said military sources — to mortars and land mines. The current violence has included vicious attacks on civilians.

On August 19, rebels ambushed and killed 25 Senegalese troops outside Ziguinchor. Since then, attackers have blown up a bus with a mine, slashed to death a village family and mowed down teen-agers at a dance with automatic rifle fire. Senegalese troops have counterattacked, and hundreds of people have been reported killed in the violence.

The recent fighting complicates Senegal's struggle to pull itself out of poverty. That effort "is tough enough" for a drought-prone farming country with little natural wealth and few foreign investors, a diplomat in Dakar, Senegal's capital, said.

Human rights groups say the conflict also has stained Senegal's otherwise tolerant political culture. Recently, Amnesty International said at least 30 civilians are missing after having been arrested in recent months and accused Senegalese security forces of executing suspected enemies without trial. Senegal's justice minister denied the charges.

The rebellion's leaders and sources of support are in some ways mysterious. But its main roots are visible in the legacies of European rule. The scrimmage for colonies in Africa created in southern Senegal some of the continent's most absurd and troublesome borders.

Along the Gambia River, Britain poked a finger of colonial territory deep into French Senegal. The resulting state, Gambia, is 15 to 30 miles wide. Gambia's protrusion into the heart of Senegal divides western Senegal between north and south, which tends to isolate Casamance and accent its differences from the rest of the country. Senegal lies mainly in the Sahel, the zone of dry grassland that crosses West Africa between the Sahara Desert and the humid forests along the Gulf of Guinea. Casamance, at the northern fringe of monsoonal rains, is where the land begins to grow palm trees and heavy brush.

"This region is an enclave, with an identity separate from Dakar," said Mamadou Moussa Ba, a radio station director in Ziguinchor, Casamance's main town. Under colonial rule, "even the [whites] had trouble imposing their authority [and] collecting taxes here."

Casamance's separation sharpened into alienation in part because of another colonial legacy. Here, as throughout Africa, the white rulers tended to rely on a particular ethnic group to help manage the colony. In Senegal, the French trained men of the Wolof tribe as administrators — and Wolofs have dominated the government since independence.

"We still are colonized," said Edouard Diediu, an ethnic Jola. "Dakar sends down Wolof officials to govern us." Jolas are mainly rice-growing subsistence farmers in coastal areas of Casamance, and they form the rebel movement.

Residents here said Wolofs tend to look on Casamance's people, particularly Jolas, as backward.

Still, the rebellion rises from more than colonial ills. Senegal's 37 years of independence have failed to redress Casamance's bitterness. This year, partly because of Casamance's demands, the government in Dakar set up regional councils throughout Senegal that will share authority for educational, cultural and development policy.

Droughts in the 1970s pushed many Northerners into the better-watered Casamance, and the resulting land disputes have helped radicalize Southerners.

So has poverty. Ziguinchor's streets are full of unemployed youths, rotting garbage and flowing sewage.

The town's problems are compounded by the fact that it has become home to an estimated 5,000 refugees from the fighting in the region; thousands more have fled the country for Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, aid workers say.

Residents and Senegalese journalists said the rebels seem to number no more than a few hundred. The figurehead of the secessionist movement is the Rev. Diamacoune Senghor, a 69-year-old Catholic priest. By agreement with the government, the church keeps Senghor under detention in Ziguinchor.

But he appears to have lost authority amid a splintered rebel leadership, said a church source and other Senegalese. That has left the government groping for an authoritative negotiating partner, said Cheikh Tijane Dieye, the spokesman for President Abdou Diouf.

In July, the government flew exiled rebel intellectuals from Paris to Ziguinchor for talks with Senghor and field commanders in the bush, but the meetings yielded no clear rebel response to Dakar's offer of negotiations.

Gays Winning Acceptance in Argentina

Anthony Faiola in Buenos Aires

ITS GOING to take Oscar Mercado a little more time, he says, before it really sinks in. After all, when he was teenager in 1950s Buenos Aires, the government arrested him for being gay. And for years, Mercado and his partner of 27 years, as homosexuals, did not have the right to vote.

But now, four years after his companion's death, the Argentine government is willing to recognize their longtime union. Mercado, now 62, is one of the first 20 gay men and lesbians to apply under a new official policy here that offers the same spousal retirement benefits to gay couples as to heterosexuals. The new measure will give Mercado the pension owed to his deceased partner, who worked in a cigarette factory for three decades.

"I still can't believe it," Mercado said. "I honestly did not think I would ever live to see this day in Argentina."

In a country where, little more than a decade ago, police and military officials routinely arrested citizens on the mere suspicion of being homosexual, the now democratized society is undergoing a dramatic about-face.

The most striking example of change in this predominantly Roman Catholic country came in May, when the Argentine government extended spousal retirement benefits to homosexual couples who have lived together for at least five years — granting them the same rights recently given to unmarried heterosexual couples. The move came after three of the nation's largest labor unions, representing teachers, airlines and retail employees, extended spousal pension provisions to the surviving partner of a deceased gay worker.

In Buenos Aires, where local gay rights advocates say tolerance remains higher than in the provinces, a law that forbade same-sex couples from renting hotel rooms was repealed last month as the mayor cited the right to "free sexuality."

The legal measures underscore a dramatic bloom in gay culture. Last month, a new gay-themed magazine called Diez Porciento (10 Percent), a name that refers to the belief that one out of 10 people in the world is gay, began appearing on newsstands. At least two popular Argentine television dramas portray gay characters in a positive way; both have featured male and female same-sex kisses.

In May, Noticias, the nation's largest general-circulation news magazine, showed two lesbians on its cover, heralding a story about "Argentina, Sexuality and Change."

"We are having a cultural revolution unlike any other in Latin America!" said Cristian Cravello, co-founder of Diez Porciento, which focuses on gay fashion, music, art and pop culture. "As this country is modernizing, and becoming linked with the Internet and communication from around the globe, our attitudes are becoming more modern and more accepting."

On the fashionable Santa Fe Avenue in Buenos Aires's upscale Barrio Norte, gay youths gather openly on well-lit corners on weekend nights while slick-dressed men hand out coupons and fliers to gay discos, restaurants and cafes.

As with much of Latin America, gay society was hidden in the shadows for years, as gays were officially persecuted and viewed as diseased citizens and religious outcasts. Gays and lesbians were barred from holding public office, and were among the thousands who disappeared during the "Dirty War" conducted by Argentina's military dictatorships from 1976 to 1983.

Gay rights advocates say that despite their huge strides in the 13 years since the military dictatorship fell, many more obstacles exist. For instance, laws barring homosexuals from the military remain on the books.

But the current shift in Argentina has longtime gay rights advocate Rafael Freda shaking his head in wonder. "All of it would have been absolutely unheard of five or 10 years ago," said Freda, president of the Gay and Lesbian Integration Society of Argentina. "They would have been too busy arresting us to grant us Social Security benefits."

History Played Back

Walter Pincus

THE KENNEDY TAPES
Inside the White House
During the Cuban Missile Crisis
Edited by Ernest R. May
and Philip D. Zelikow
Harvard University Press. 728pp. $35.

FOR THOSE who want their history straight, who enjoy reading the words of government officials from the president on down as they attempt to deal with a serious international crisis — not filtered through print reporters, television anchormen or cloistered historians — this is a book to treasure.

It also should be read, at least portions of it, by those present-day consumers of newspapers, magazines and television news shows who think the briefly spun daily doses of what purport to be the activities at the White House capture complex presidential decision-making even slightly.

"What's new?" is the question regularly asked when an archival book such as this is published. The quick answer here is "nothing," if what you have in mind is some stunning new fact. The true answer, however, is that a great deal here is new if you want to understand the day-to-day evolution of a policy and the people involved in a crisis through all its ups and downs. It is particularly fascinating to read the exchanges among President Kennedy; his brother Robert, the attorney general; Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara; Secretary of State Dean Rusk; national security adviser McGeorge Bundy; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor; and others almost equally well-known as they pose questions, provide answers, argue, reach decisions and frequently change them.

The plot is familiar. The Soviets clandestinely bring nuclear missiles into Cuba in 1962 and attempt to deploy them. U.S. overflights discover them. There are secret diplomatic exchanges against a background of public statements. The United States puts in place a blockade and makes preparations for air strikes against the missile sites and Cuban air defenses if the missiles are not removed, with a full-scale invasion to follow.

What is not familiar, however, are the myriad steps and potential missteps over the 13 days, as disclosed in transcripts of taped meetings of the so-called Ex-Com or executive committee. The editors have bolstered the transcripts with helpful historical and political notes.

If you do nothing else, read the transcript of the meetings of Saturday, October 20, the day that McNamara said he went home from the White House thinking that perhaps they had taken a step toward nuclear war. It was a day that had President Kennedy and his aides dealing with the famous private and then public statements by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. The first, private statement said that the missiles would go if the United States made assurances that there would be no invasion of Cuba. The second, public announcement offered to exchange the Cuban weapons for withdrawal of U.S. missiles in Turkey — part of NATO's nuclear arsenal. Next came the firing on low-flying U.S. reconnaissance planes prompted by an earlier White House statement that we would retaliate for such action. Later, word came that an American U2 spy plane had been shot down and its pilot killed.

As October 20 goes on, each of these events must be dealt with. While in the room, President Kennedy clearly takes the lead, although other Ex-Com members, including his brother, share their thoughts freely. The group goes back and forth working out responses to each event; its discussions take place against a background belief that Khrushchev will not back down and that eventually the plans under way at the Pentagon — plans not only for massive air raids on Cuba but also for an invasion of the island


Kennedy: The president clearly takes the lead PHOTO CORNELL CAPA

— will inevitably be implemented within the next few days.

As the pages unfold, dozens of items are discussed. A U.S. U2 has strayed over Siberia into Soviet air space; Kennedy with McNamara's support decides not to disclose it publicly so as not to embarrass Khrushchev with a provocation. The president and his aides go back and forth over whether to tell the NATO allies that Washington is prepared to agree to withdraw U.S. missiles from Turkey because nuclear-armed Polaris submarines are to be stationed off Turkey as less vulnerable replacements. In the end the NATO briefing is limited to a report on the seriousness of the situation because, as Kennedy put it, "anything else would leak."

McNamara, convinced that a U.S. attack on Cuba would bring retaliation against the missile bases in Turkey, suggests making them "inoperable. And let the Soviets know that before the Cuban attack ... that basis, I don't believe the Soviets would strike Turkey." Llewellyn "Tommy" Thompson, former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, whose analyses of Soviet attitudes proved in retrospect almost flawless, suggests that disclosing the Polaris plan would achieve "nothing toward persuading the Soviets to trade out their missiles in Cuba ... getting rid of the Jupiters [the missiles in Turkey]."

Bundy at one point reminds the president that his desire to show the world he was prepared not to reject out of hand Khrushchev's offer to trade Cuban missiles for those in Turkey would inevitably harm Washington's relations not only with NATO countries but other allies. "There are two different audiences here, Mr. President," Bundy says.

Showing his realistic view of people and the allies, Kennedy points out that although taking the missiles out of Turkey might appear unacceptable to some, the prospect of having to fly 500 U.S. bombing sorties a day over Cuba for several days to destroy the Soviet nuclear capability there, followed by a possible invasion of Cuba, might make the Turkish deal look better. "We all know how quickly everybody's courage goes when the blood starts to flow," he says, "and that's what's going to happen in NATO. When they start these things and they [the Soviets] grab Berlin, everybody's going to say: 'Well, that was a pretty good proposition [meaning the Turkey missile trade].'"

A Kennedy-type statement would be hell of a television sound bite if the subject were Bosnia and the speaker President Clinton. It's lucky for all of us that Kennedy's words that day weren't leaked and that the crisis came to a successful conclusion, thanks in part to the fact that almost all the conversations that took place behind closed doors 35 years ago remained secret.

Perhaps we would have better chances these days of solving complex foreign policy problems — and have fewer initiatives driven primarily by spin and public relations — if officials were able to keep their deliberations secret.

Writing After Midnight in India

Guy Amirthanayagam

MIRRORWORK
50 Years of Indian Writing, 1947-1997
Edited by Salman Rushdie
and Elizabeth West
Henry Holt. 553pp. $30;
paperback, $15.

WHEN anthologists put together a vibrant, richly composite collection of a hitherto underappreciated literature spanning a period of half a century and meant to coincide with India's 50 years of independence, it is a matter for unqualified gratitude. Especially when one of the editors, Salman Rushdie, is the writer who both by his own work and his championship of Indian writing in English has put this literature on the map of international letters. But let me crave the reader's indulgence for commenting on the shortcomings of this excellent collection before proceeding to its strengths.

Rushdie avers that "'Anglo-Indian literature' represents perhaps the most valuable contribution that India has yet made to the world of books." This remark must surely be an oversight, for he cannot mean that what he is promoting is superior to the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, the plays of Kalidasa, the Tamil classics, etc. And how can he so gratuitously put down the 16 "official languages" of India when he admits he cannot read any of these languages: How can he judge O.V. Vijayan (who writes in Malayalam) or V.R. Ananthamurthy (Kannada) or Amrita Pritam (Punjabi)? When he makes a cursory reference to these writers he is surely guilty of transmitting received opinion or indulging in special pleading.

The next major inadequacy is that a book which purports to cover Indian writing has no selections from Indian poetry written in English. This cannot be due to lack of space: Some of the excerpts from prose writers who have not yet proved their mettle could have been left out to accommodate some highly accomplished poets.

Another disquieting feature is that a high percentage of the writers represented are expatriates from the Indian subcontinent. Rushdie in his introduction celebrates them for holding a "conversation with the world," but the phenomenon should have been addressed more fully, and reasons sought for such an exodus.

It is easy to fault anthologies, especially because the process of selection is so much influenced by the vagaries of personal taste and individual judgment, but I will not succumb to this temptation. Given the range of their search among material from India and overseas, given that the English-reading public of India could exceed in numbers, if it has not already, the entire population of Great Britain, Rushdie and West have done an extremely fine piece of work.

Their sense of literary savor is impeccable, and when one is a trifle disappointed with a particular selection, it is because the excerpt cannot give you an adequate sense of why the longer work is so important. This is true even of the much-hailed Arundhati Roy, whose novel The God Of Small Things is now so famous; one cannot determine from the extract whether it is deserved fame or trendy notoriety.

Of course, the great achievers of Indian writing in English are suitably recognized. There is Nirad Chauduri, a maverick autodidact who forged an original Victorian prose style out of reading books in English, deprived as he was of any English-speaking community of educated peers; but no extract can convey his irreverent, even iconoclastic attitude toward the much-vaunted heritage of India. If there is a need for anti-chauvinistic common sense, India needs it more than most; Chauduri was the answer and the antidote.

Another mischievous rebel included here is G.V. Desani, whose tour-de-force All About H. Haterr is, as Anthony Burgess called it, a coterie classic. Mulk Raj Anand, a pioneer and humanitarian, deserves his space though he is not to be compared to R.K. Narayan, who could fill with distinction all the space one could spare. You can also find in these pages Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, a fine writer for the most part but controversial, and Anita Desai, one of the best and most prolific of Indian writers in English. Rushdie, who enriched the English language with Indianizing accretions to the extent that he created not only a new idiom but a new style, is here with the justly celebrated excerpt "The Perforated Sheet" from Midnight's Children. There is Rohinton Mistry, who in the end may surpass all others. There is Vikram Seth, who was a fine poet but became a mediocre and long-winded novelist, though this extract itself is hilariously funny.

I don't share Rushdie's admiration for Allen Sealy, though I will withhold my judgment till I have read more than the extract here. Shashi Tharoor could become an important writer if he would forgo his political, bureaucratic and administrative interests; he straddles the border between creative art and well-written reportage.

But I am most grateful to the editors for introducing me to Padma Perera, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sara Suleri, who in Meatless Days writes a brilliant prose, Firdaus Kanga, Amitav Gosh and Kiran Desai, who has a stronger claim to be noticed than that she is Anita Desai's daughter. I will follow their literary futures with interest.

So, while congratulating Salman Rushdie and Elizabeth West on the collection, let me tell them not to dream of literary dynasties. It was to end all dynasties that Jawaharlal Nehru spoke on the attainment of Indian independence; that was his "Tryst with Destiny" (a transcript of this famous speech opens the book). Let us also not exaggerate the achievement. We must compare 50 years of American or British literary history, or the Caribbean Renaissance (Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul, Caryl Phillips, Roy Heath et al), and remember that within 50 years in Russia, we had Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky and Turgenev. Let us celebrate, but with a sense of perspective.

Wired in a world without frontiers

Only the most nimble can survive the lightning pace of change in the telecoms industry, says **Antony Barnett**

IT'S 2010. You're travelling through a remote part of the world. You have a phone with you — one of the latest generation mobiles, complete with a screen and Internet connection — the phone that you use at home and at work.

It rings. It's your estate agent. He has found the dream house you've spent 12 months looking for. In seconds he is sending video footage to your screen via a satellite. You love the house. You e-mail your bank and solicitor to get things moving and decide to cut short your trip.

You call your travel agent and get her to change flights and book a hotel. She sends a photo of the accommodation plus a map of how to get there. On the train to the hotel, you switch your phone to TV and catch up on the live Premiership football match between league leaders Arsenal and Manchester United.

And you don't worry about the cost: the calls are charged at local rate because they are channelled through the Internet.

Like it or not, this world of cheap, any time, anywhere telecommunications is on its way. This week, leading telecoms companies such as Nokia, Motorola, Ericsson and NEC will open the Yokosuka Research Park, 50km south of Tokyo, specifically to develop the kind of advanced technology outlined above.

Look at Wall Street's backing for the $30 billion record-breaking takeover bid made by WorldCom for the telecoms group MCI, which seems to have snuffed out British Telecom's offer for the company.

Few outside the United States had heard of WorldCom before the news broke, and indeed five years ago it barely existed. This is a young upstart that has come from nowhere and now is the largest Internet access provider in the world and the fourth-largest long-distance operator in the US.

And as if WorldCom's counterbid weren't bad enough for BT, news came last week of a technological breakthrough that threatens its precious hold on the UK residential market. Nortel of Canada and United Utilities announced they had found a way to send undistorted Internet signals and computer data along electricity power lines at speeds 30 times greater than today's high-speed modems. They promise cheap Internet access, plus the potential of telephone calls and video clips two years down the road.

It is hard not to feel sorry for BT. Of the former state-owned monoliths, it has tried hardest to reinvent itself as a young, hungry company.

But events this month have made it look slow to react to the fast-changing world of radio waves and satellites. Ian Vance, Nortel Europe's chief telecoms scientist, is himself astonished at the speed of change. Asked for a vision of telecommunications in five years' time, he says: "I can't. I simply do not know. It's changing so fast, it is totally unfeasible to think three years hence, let alone five." Nortel is also behind the "fixed wireless" technology that has allowed Cambridge-based Ionica to offer residential telephone services in competition to BT and the cable companies without the huge expense of digging up roads and laying down wires.

It is these technological developments, together with the liberalisation of the global telecoms industry, that have led to a new breed of nimble and aggressive companies grabbing chunks of the $700 billion-a-year market. These new entrants are run by entrepreneurs backed by whizz-bang technology, low costs and minimal bureaucracy.

The typical new telecoms company is also hot — very hot — on marketing and packaging. Instead of inventing a product and then asking the marketing department to sell it — as so often the likes of BT do — these new entrants think about what the consumer wants first and then develop the technology.

BUT perhaps the greatest threat to the traditional telecoms company comes from the Internet. In the past, handsome profits were made by overcharging on international calls. Technological developments and market liberalisation have forced prices down to about $1 for a one-minute international telephone call at peak rates. But this is still far higher than what is available on the Internet, where all calls are charged at a local rate.

Technologies are now available for sending high-quality voice messages over the Internet. You won't even need a PC in your house, just a phone connected to a "smart" box on the wall.

It's not just voice, but fax as well. Fax transmissions account for nearly a third of the $62 billion market for international telephone calls. WorldCom, for instance, offers an international fax service over the Internet, which cuts the cost between New York and London from about 30 cents a page to 16-19 cents.

So where do the computer giants fit in? It's no surprise that companies such as Microsoft have already started to invest in telecoms. Last week Microsoft announced a deal with German giant Deutsche Telekom. It has already put $1 million into Comcast, a US cable company. And it won't stop there.

The likes of Bill Gates will not, of course, be satisfied with having to rely on someone else's wires. In 1990 he and Craig McCaw, the US mobile phone pioneer, launched a $9.6 billion joint venture called Teledesic. This involves using a few hundred satellites 1,400km above the Earth's surface to create an "internet in space" by 2002. Eventually this should allow cheap, high-speed, wire-free communication between any two points, no matter how remote. But Gates does have competition. In June, Motorola unveiled rival plans for a $13 billion satellite project called Iridium, and another four consortiums have similar plans.

The WorldCom bid for MCI was just the first lap of the race for telecommunication supremacy, with competitors barely off their starting blocks. By the time the finishing line is in sight, observers predict the upheaval will have had an impact on society as great as the industrial revolution and that the companies on the winners' rostrum may be as unknown to us now as the technologies that put them there. — *The Observer*

Tories need to restock their shelves with sellable ideas

COMMENT
Larry Elliott

ARCHIE NORMAN, the man behind the supermarket chain Asda's success and now helping to modernise Britain's Tory machine, should understand all too well the predicament in which the Conservatives find themselves five months after their morale-sapping defeat in the general election.

Labour under Tony Blair has become the political equivalent of a modern hypermarket, a flash new out-of-town job that drives all the competition out of business by gathering everything the shopper might conceivably want under one roof.

Labour threatens to monopolise the entire political market place. You want an ethical arms-sales policy? Step up to the counter over here and see what Robin Cook can offer you. Want to talk about a Lib-Lab pact? You got it. Fancy paying for higher education through student fees rather than higher income tax? Take a look at our new range of products, entirely free of socialism, in which rightwing ideas are repackaged as radical initiatives.

Do you get the picture? The more clued-in Conservatives certainly do. Faced with the prospect of becoming the political equivalent of a late-night convenience store, Michael Portillo and Peter Lilley spent last week desperately trying to change their brand image from Free Market Plc to One Nation Tories 'R' Us.

In order to win, you have to be competing in the same game, not be a niche player. Mr Portillo and Mr Lilley recognise this. "Mr Blair's great achievement is directionless leadership," the former Defence Secretary said in his *mea culpa* lecture in Blackpool last week. "He appears to be in control, but no one knows to where he is heading."

Mr Portillo denies that he has had a Damascene conversion to one-nation Toryism, but most independent observers would say that he has kept his concern for the poor well disguised over the years. His was the party, after all, that severed the link between pensions and earnings, presided over the biggest rise in inequality in Britain's history, used unemployment as the main tool for bringing down inflation and, even in the dying days of 18 years in power, managed one last spiteful gesture with the scrapping of the single-parent child benefit top-up.

Given that legacy, the Conservatives may discover that public rehabilitation will take more than a bit more inclusion for minority groups, the use of a few of the touchy-feely buzz-words of the modern age, and a bit of patience until Tony's hugathon with the British public finally comes to an end.

As Labour found during its years in the wilderness, it is not that easy, not least because there is no earthly reason why the Government should blow it. The Labour governments of


Michael Portillo: revealed as a born-again one-nation Tory

the 1960s and 1970s were fatally undermined by economic crises; this time the Conservatives left Britain in good shape.

One option for the new Tory leader, William Hague, would be to become a truly conservative party — not just talking about job insecurity but doing something about it, and taking serious steps to safeguard the environment.

The advantage of this approach is that it would chime with the Opposition line on Europe, and that taken over constitutional reform. The disadvantage is that it might sound a trifle backward-looking when set against Mr Blair's millennium vision (whatever that is).

A second possible drawback, that it would offend the Conservative party's friends in big business, no longer applies because the party has few friends left in big business. Labour is now the party that better represents the interests of multinational corporations, both in its emphasis on preparing children for work along the lines demanded by industry and in its much more positive line on a single currency.

The Conservatives remain the party of small business, and if there is to be a real realignment of British politics they may emerge as a populist party talking the same language of economic protectionism as Pat Buchanan has in the United States.

But even to achieve this, the Conservatives will have to rethink their attitude to the state. At present, the glorification of the nation state when it comes to foreign policy and the constitution sits uneasily with the idea that the state is powerless when it comes to economics, and positively malign when it comes to social policy.

The Conservatives need to recognise that one reason the state has been unable to take a more active role is that 20 years of deflationary economic policies and inegalitarian social and taxation policies have led to a concentration of public spending on alleviating poverty and unemployment. The reason, paradoxically, why we cannot have Keynesian economic policies is that monetarism has screwed up the public sector borrowing requirement.

It does not have to be like that. If, and it is a big if, the Government can restore health to the public finances, the next few years could easily see the state playing a more active role, in industrial and economic policy as well as health and education. Labour already recognises this. It knows that is what the customer wants. And the customer, as any good supermarket chain knows, is always right.

In Brief

THE Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, sent a shudder through financial markets after he warned that wage pressure in the US could trigger inflation. His remarks reignited worries that the US's central bank is considering another rise in interest rates.

UK homeowners won another month's respite from the threat of dearer mortgages after the Bank of England decided to keep interest rates at their current level. It decided not to follow the lead of the German authorities, who tightened rates by 30 basis points as a pre-emptive strike against inflation, despite record unemployment.

CHANCELLOR Helmut Kohl's cabinet, after months of delay, approved Germany's purchase of 180 Eurofighters at a cost of $13 billion.

THE London stock market experienced a session of extraordinary activity as mergers worth more than $100 billion were struck, prompting hopes of more mega-mergers. The most important deal to advance was the proposed $40 billion merger of Guinness and Grand Metropolitan. And BAT, the British tobacco and finance group, is in advanced merger discussions with the insurer Zurich Group over the creation of a $36 billion financial services empire that would dominate the European market.

BROWN & Williamson, a subsidiary of BAT, will contribute to a $300 million research foundation as part of a Miami settlement ending the first lawsuit over passive smoking to go to trial.

SHARE prices in BSkyB television fell sharply after media tycoon Rupert Murdoch said he expected a dull performance from the satellite broadcaster over the next two years.

SUNTOURS, the UK tour operator, had debts of up to $16 million when it collapsed. A liquidator has been appointed.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates October 13	Sterling rates October 6
Australia	2.2095-2.2128	2.2268-2.2294
Austria	19.98-20.01	19.99-20.01
Belgium	58.60-58.70	58.61-58.83
Canada	2.2392-2.2422	2.2108-2.2128
Denmark	10.81-10.82	10.81-10.82
France	9.53-9.54	9.55-9.56
Germany	2.8399-2.8429	2.8409-2.8436
Hong Kong	12.58-12.59	12.47-12.48
Ireland	1.1118-1.1147	1.1057-1.1081
Italy	2,790-2,793	2,785-2,788
Japan	195.99-196.24	198.20-198.41
Netherlands	3.1991-3.2024	3.1997-3.2031
New Zealand	2.5075-2.5110	2.5436-2.5388
Norway	11.36-11.37	11.36-11.37
Portugal	288.70-289.04	289.71-290.04
Spain	239.60-239.82	239.97-240.23
Sweden	12.26-12.27	12.13-12.14
Switzerland	2.3713-2.3744	2.3417-2.3443
USA	1.6226-1.6236	1.6125-1.6134
ECU	1.4476-1.4496	1.4501-1.4622

FTSE 100 Share Index up 0.1 at 5300.1. FTSE 250 Index up 52.6 at 4920.0. Gold up $3.75 at $329.50.

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Informal enquiries can be made to Professor John Brewer, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, telephone (01232) 245133 ext. 3749, FAX (01232) 320668, or j.brewer@qub.ac.uk.

Further particulars (please quote Ref: L004C) are available from the Personnel Office, The Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT7 1NN.

Tel: (01232) 273246/273044, 273854 (answering machine) or FAX (01232) 324944.

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Rufiji Delta and FloodPlain: Environmental Management and Biodiversity Conservation of Forests, Woodlands and Wetlands Project, Phase 1

IUCN is providing technical support to the Rufiji District Administration in Tanzania in implementing an innovative and multi-disciplinary five-year project that aims at promoting the long-term conservation and "wise use" of the Rufiji River delta and floodplain ecosystems. These comprise mangrove forests and estuaries, floodplain wetlands, lakes, riparian forests, wetland edge woodlands and coastal forests. Major components of the Project include capacity building, enhancing the livelihoods of local communities, environmental planning and management, and the harmonisation of conservation objectives and human development needs. Promoting awareness, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources, are also important objectives for the project.

Chief Technical Advisor

He/She will assist with the overall supervision and direction of the Project, and the development and initial implementation of an Environmental Management Plan. Day to day work will include interaction with the District Administration and District Council, planning and oversight of project activities at village, ecosystem and district levels, counterpart training and capacity building within the District Administration, especially for environmental planning and biodiversity conservation.

The candidate must have at least a second degree in a relevant discipline and a minimum of ten years of professional experience in natural resource management and environmental planning, particularly in forests and/or wetlands. The ideal candidate will have a biophysical background, some experience of land use planning at a senior level and exposure to hydrological issues. S/he will have the ability to lead a field based team, familiarity with working in projects in the developing world, experience of working with communities and, ideally, a knowledge of Kiswahili.

Technical Advisor - Socio-Economics/Community Development

He/She will be responsible for technical input to the community aspects of the project, especially in relation to socio-economic and gender analysis, community natural resource planning; village environmental plans and the participation of communities in the implementation of the district environmental management plan.

The candidate must have at least a second degree in a relevant discipline and between five and ten years experience of rural socio-economic surveys in developing countries, a knowledge of ecosystem management issues, and experience of implementing small-scale rural development activities, as well as in addressing gender issues. Field experience of interacting with communities in Africa and a working knowledge of Kiswahili would be a strong advantage.

Both posts will be based in the field at Utet, headquarters of Rufiji District, in inland, southern Tanzania and will call for field work within the Rufiji District as well as representation of the project to central Government.

Applicants should submit letters of application, detailed curriculum vitae and names of three professional referees to: The Regional Representative, IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office, P.O. Box 68200, Nairobi, Kenya.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT: BIOLOGY

Professor

Requirements: Ph.D in Terrestrial Animal Ecology; a proven record of research; at least ten years tertiary teaching experience.

Job description: Teaching Terrestrial Animal Ecology up to fourth year level and general courses at junior level; supervision of projects in related areas.

Lecturer

Requirements: Ph.D or equivalent in Molecular Biology; research experience and exposure to teaching up to fourth year level; an interest or background in Microbiology will serve as strong recommendation.

Job description: Teaching Molecular Biology up to fourth year level and general courses – including Microbiology and preparatory courses – at junior level.

Date of assumption of duties: January 1998.

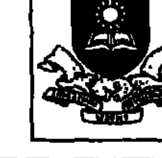
Contact persons: Mr Andrew K Kanime at +264-61- 206-3151 or Ms Monica Heita at +264-61- 206-3102.

Closing date: 7 November 1997.

Fringe benefits: The University of Namibia offers competitive salaries and the following fringe benefits: ● pension fund/gratuity scheme ● medical aid scheme ● annual bonus ● housing scheme ● generous leave privileges ● relocation expenses.

Non-Namibian citizens may be appointed for a 3-year, renewable contract period.

Application procedure: Applications in writing, accompanied by a curriculum vitae stating full details of present salary notch, increment date, the earliest available date when duty can be assumed and including three referees should be submitted to: The Head, Recruitment and Administration, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Preliminary telegraphic applications may be made via fax +264-61-206-3843/206-3003 or E-mail: akanime@unam.na.



ADwalk — S8120/P656

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The International Programme Advisory and Development Department (IPADD) is a growing department with a key role in providing advice to operational desks, developing policies and procedures as well as undertaking research to enhance programme effectiveness. The department plays an important role in BRCs International Programming, with a widening sphere of influence both within the Red Cross and the wider international humanitarian sector. An exciting opportunity for a Disaster Preparedness (DP) Advisor has arisen.

You will have responsibility for providing specialist advice on the policy and operational aspects of the Management of DP Programmes. You will also be involved in ongoing research and policy work. You will have at least three years' overseas experience and a Masters degree or equivalent in a relevant subject. A solid grounding in both theory and practice and the ability to produce clear written work will be essential. You will work with a team of three other Advisors and will report to the Head of Department. The position necessitates you to work abroad for up to 60 days per year.

For an application form and and information pack, please send a large self addressed envelope, quoting reference number RSM/DPA/GW in the top left hand corner of the envelope to: The British Red Cross Society, Human Resources Department, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London SW1X 7EJ. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is: 31 October 1997.



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Senior Management Opportunities in East and Central Africa

£24,368 p.a. + benefits

The Save the Children Fund is the UK's largest international voluntary agency working for the rights and welfare of children worldwide. We have a long history of work across East Africa and more recently have also established and developed programmes more broadly across the 'Great Lakes' region. The work ranges from emergency relief to longer term work including health, food security, social policy and community development.

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR - RWANDA

SCF has been operational in parts of the Great Lakes region for many years and in Rwanda since 1994. Following an initial emergency response, the programme developed into a very large regional family tracing programme, with significant inputs in health and social policy at national and provincial level. Recently the tracing work has decreased and a broader social welfare programme is developing to address the needs of vulnerable children. In addition we have food security advisors working at national level. The programme director is also responsible for SCF's programme in Burundi where SCF has been working in support of the Ministry of Health for one year, has seconded a food security advisor to WFP and is involved with unaccompanied children. **Ref: PD/RWA**

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR - DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

SCF's involvement in former Zaire dates from 1994 when large numbers of refugees fled Rwanda to neighbouring countries. Until recently managed from Rwanda, programme activities have focused on the identification and reunification of unaccompanied children in the Eastern part of the DRC. SCF is also working in the health sector supporting facilities in the N and S Kivu regions. We are now working to expand the programme in support of the local Congolese population in the broad areas of health, nutrition, social welfare and education. This will include working alongside and in support of local NGOs and other organisations, whilst maintaining an emergency response capacity. The PD will take responsibility for setting up SCF's base in Kinshasa and making appropriate contacts to facilitate the expansion of our work into other areas of the country. **Ref: PD/DRC**

For both the Programme Director posts you will have overall responsibility for the management and strategic development of the country programme and for ensuring that SCF contributes effectively to meeting the long and short-term needs of children, in accordance with SCF's global programme strategy. For either post, you will need substantial international senior management experience of overseas relief and development programmes, demonstrating skills in financial, resource and staff management and development, strong analytical and conceptual skills, excellent team building and leadership skills, political awareness and experience of working in an area where security is an issue. Fluent in written and spoken French and English, you will also have strong communication and interpersonal skills with experience of senior level negotiation, liaison and representation.

HEAD OF REGIONAL OFFICE - EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The Kenya based SCF regional office provides advice on SCF policy and strategies for both the London HQ and field offices throughout East and Central Africa. As head of this office and leader of a regional support team, you will facilitate team working and sharing of information across the region. You will also be responsible for ensuring the pursuit of SCF's global programme strategy and for carrying forward organisational and programme changes to ensure child-focused development is central to SCF's work in the region. This approach will be fostered by working closely with programme directors in the region, providing them with technical advice and support for their individual country projects.

You will need significant and varied international experience of relief and development work, preferably in East and Central Africa. This will vary from work at grass roots level to negotiating and networking at national and international level. To meet the particular challenges of this senior and influential position you will also need leadership, consulting and communication skills, management experience, considerable analytical and conceptual ability and an understanding of the political and economic situation in the region. **Ref: HRO/ECA**

Salaries should be tax free and come with a good benefits package, including accommodation, other living expenses and generous leave. All posts are offered on 25 month contracts and have accompanied status.

For further details and an application form for all the above posts write with CV for ref HRO/ECA to Jenny Thomas and for refs PD/RWA and PD/DRC to Alice Desira, Overseas Personnel, SCF, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD or fax 0171 793 7610.

Closing date: 14th November 1997.

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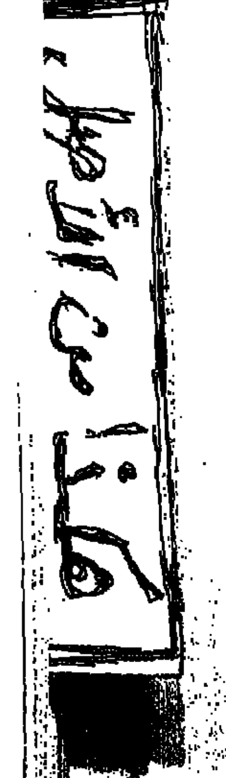
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The Practice Manager, International Organisation Development, 2 Shutlock Lane, Moseley, Birmingham B12 9TZ.
Fax. 0121 444 8476 E-Mail. Iod-consulting@easynet.co.uk



Exciting Opportunities with SCF in Southern Africa

We have two exciting opportunities to join our Southern Africa programme team. As programme director, you will have overall responsibility for the management and strategic development of the country programmes and for ensuring that SCF contributes effectively to meeting the long-term and short-term needs of children in accordance with SCF's global programme strategy.

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

£24,368 p.a. + benefits **Zimbabwe**

One of your key tasks will be leading the development of the Country strategy for the next four years. You will also be involved in taking forward innovative changes in the programme which include supporting the development of local organisations to take over programme delivery. The Zimbabwe programme has taken the lead on child rights work in SCF's Southern African region and also manages a regional risk mapping advisory programme. The country programme has a well deserved reputation for being a testing ground for innovative ideas and approaches. **Ref: PD/ZIM**

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

£22,145 p.a. + benefits **Lesotho**

This represents a unique opportunity to radically transform an existing programme and at the same time make a major contribution to new inter-regional programme management and strategy development. In this position you will be expected to lead the programme through a key period of transition. This will involve developing new projects, identifying new donors, and restructuring and re-building the team, to deliver the new programme. It will also involve developing new ways of working, particularly looking at links with our work in South Africa. **Ref: PD/LES**

For both posts, we are looking for creative and dynamic managers with substantial international senior management experience of overseas development programmes, demonstrating skills in financial, resource and staff management and development, strong analytical and conceptual skills, excellent team building and leadership skills. Strong communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to manage change are also key requirements.

The posts are both offered on 25 month contracts and have accompanied status. Salaries should be tax free. You can also expect generous benefits packages, including accommodation, flights and other living expenses.

For further details and an application form write with CV, quoting appropriate reference, to: Jenny Thomas, Overseas Personnel Administrator, Africa, SCF, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD or fax 0171 793 7610.

Closing date: 10th November 1997.

SCF aims to be an equal opportunities employer.

Save the Children

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CARE Australia is an international independent, operational humanitarian agency which responds to human need through development programs and emergency aid relief. CARE Australia has two opportunities available in its Middle East operations:

CARE AUSTRALIA

REGIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: JORDAN

This position, based in the Middle East Regional Office in Amman, Jordan, will be responsible for the strategic planning, specific programme development, monitoring & evaluation, project and programme review, reporting and programme analysis, dealing with both missions and donors of the Middle East Office.

The successful applicant will have demonstrated skills, ability and knowledge in:- program development, monitoring & evaluation, reporting requirements and programme review, donor requirements, excellent communication skills, preparation and critical review of proposals and reports, high level negotiation and liaison skills, development of project budgets, and leadership and management skills.

PROGRAM OFFICER : YEMEN

An opportunity exists for an experienced Community Development Program Officer, with CARE in Yemen. This position requires experience in donor liaison, multi sector needs assessment and programme development, especially in gender issues and women's groups, preferably in an Islam culture.

Applications should be sent to, and further information on these positions can be obtained from:

The Regional Manager
CARE Australia Middle East Office
PO Box 5062
Amman JORDAN
Ph: 962 6 5527921 Fax: 962 6 5527951

Applications close two weeks from the date of this edition of The Guardian Weekly

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Concern is seeking to recruit staff for the following demanding but challenging positions

HEALTH ADVISER - Dublin based

The Health Adviser will advise on and support the development of public health and primary health care as a core competency in Concern Overseas programmes

Applicants should have a minimum of three years experience in the management of NGO emergency and primary health care programmes overseas, should hold (a) a MD with a qualification in tropical medicine and/or a Masters in Public Health (MPH) (International) or (b) have a health background with an MSc (Policy and Planning) and/or an MPH (International) Excellent interpersonal, research, reporting, programming and training skills are essential. Applicants should be computer literate and be available to undertake overseas assignments totalling four month per annum

NUTRITION OFFICER - Dublin based
HEALTH OFFICER - Dublin based

The primary responsibility of both officers will be the assessment and programme set up activities associated with an emergency programme, in addition to duties for training health and nutrition staff on Concern's emergency register, monitoring emerging nutritional and health crises in developing countries and networking with NGOs and professional institutions. In addition to undertaking assignments as part of emergency programmes.

Applicants should have a minimum of three years experience in emergency health/nutrition projects in an NGO setting. The Nutrition Officer will hold a primary degree in nutrition or dietetics. The Health Officer will hold a primary Medical/Health Science Degree or hold a SRN/RHN qualification. Both posts require excellent interpersonal, report writing and training skills in addition to being computer literate. Applicants should have the ability to cope with the traumas of emergency work and be willing to be deployed to emergency programmes at very short notice.

For further information please contact Deirdre Rigby, Telephone 00-353-1-4754162, Fax 00-353-1-4754649 E-mail deirdre.rigby@concern.ie

Closing date for applications is Friday 14 November 1997.

DRUG SCHEME PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR FOR ALL BNMT IN NEPAL

The Britain-Nepal Medical Trust is a well established non-governmental organisation working in Nepal's Eastern region with government and non-government partners in the fields of tuberculosis control, essential drug supplies and community health. It employs 150 staff and has an annual budget of £400,000.

The **DSP Co-ordinator** is responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of BNMT's Drug Scheme Programme and for defining overall programme direction. This includes developing proposed new areas of work at the community level. The Co-ordinator also represents the DSP in meetings with government officials and other organisations, and is responsible for training BNMT staff and others in drug supply management and rational drug use. The post involves a good deal of travelling from the base in Biratnagar and is managed by BNMT's country Director.

Qualifications:	Medical doctor or pharmacist
Experience:	Previous experience of essential drugs supply, programme management and working with communities in developing countries.
Skills:	Good communicator and team worker, computer literate.

If necessary Nepali language training would be provided prior to taking up the 3 year contract from March/April 1998. The starting salary is £11,300. Benefits include accommodation and home leave flight.

An application form and job description are available from:-

B.N.M.T., 16 East Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1HG. UK,
Tel: 44 (0) 1732 360284
Fax: 44 (0)1732 363876,
E-Mail 106133.2134@compuserve.com

Closing date for applications, 14 November 1997.
Interviews to be held mid December 1997.

FINANCE AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), a not-for-profit, non-sectarian humanitarian refugee and relief organization, is currently recruiting:

FINANCE MANAGERS

for Former Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, Guinea, Liberia, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Requirements: University degree in accounting CPA, 3-5 years' relevant experience knowledge of fund accounting, procurement and fin. Mngmnt. Of USAID and UN cooperative agreements; knowledge of SunSystems, MS Office and Excel; at least 2 years' exp. Managing funds for development projects; overseas exp. In refugee setting preferred.

HEALTH PERSONNEL

for DRC, S.Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania:

Requirements: MD or RN with MPH, previous experience as supervisor, trainer and health coordinator; Positions for 12 months.

For DRC, Former Yugoslavia and Azerbaijan contact: Andrew Robarts: andrew@intrescom.org. For East and West Africa Contact: Susan Richl: susanr@intrescom.org.

Send resume and cover letter to e-mail and all faxes to: 212-551-3170.

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MINES ADVISORY GROUP

The Mines Advisory Group is an international humanitarian charity that is committed to addressing the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance among the most vulnerable communities worldwide.

Finance and Administration Manager Angola

MAG has been working in Angola since 1994 and operates a £2.1 million programme, which is planned to expand, employing 300 national and 7 expatriate staff in integrated humanitarian demining and community awareness work. The post will be based in Luanda, reporting to the Head of Operations and responsible for the national financial and administration staff. We are seeking someone with an accountancy qualification, preferably with overseas NGO experience. A knowledge of the region and of Portuguese is desirable.

The salary is £18724 p.a. on a 2 year contract.

Applications accompanied by a C.V. and supported by two references should be sent to: Mike Watson Mines Advisory Group 54A Main Street Cockermouth Cumbria CA13 9LU Tel No: 01900 827088.

The closing date for applications is Monday, 3rd November 1997.

RTC SKILLS & STRATEGIES FOR PEACE

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For Staff of international agencies with advisory or direct responsibility for programme policy and implementation.

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26 April - 2 July 1999

We also offer, on request, local workshops and consultancies in English, French or Spanish. Please contact **Responding to Conflict Programme, Selly Oak Colleges (G) 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK.** Tel: (+44) (0) 121 415 5641. Fax: (+44) (0) 121 415 4119. E-mail: enquiries@respond.org

Responding to Conflict provides opportunities for individuals and organisations to develop new ways of working on conflict.

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HEALTHNET INTERNATIONAL

HealthNet International is implementing an innovative and respected malaria and leishmaniasis control programme in Afghanistan and Pakistan based on appropriate technology. To expand coverage we intend to increase our team of health professionals over the next six months.

- Project manager (Jalalabad), to lead the training unit and malaria control team in eastern Afghanistan. Available from now.
- Technical adviser (Peshawar), to provide technical and scientific support to the malaria and leishmaniasis control projects. Available from now.
- Vector control manager (Kabul), an entomologist to run leishmaniasis control campaigns, and to conduct research on sandfly control. Available from January 1998.
- Project manager (Kabul), a clinician or epidemiologist to coordinate the leishmaniasis control and treatment services. Available from March 1998
- Programme director (Peshawar), to coordinate the various control and research projects. Available from March 1998.

HealthNet International is an NGO that provides health care in the aftermath of crisis, between the phases of emergency relief and sustainable development.

Qualifications: An appropriate health degree, overseas managerial experience, experience in the control of vector borne disease is desirable.

For further information and job descriptions contact: Judith Zaal, HealthNet International, Singel 540, 1017 AZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tel: (31) 20 420 1115 Fax: (31) 20 4 20 1503. e-mail: Judith@hni.nl.

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A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY IN A DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Oxfam Hong Kong, a development and relief agency working with poor people in Asia and Africa, has the following vacancy:

Programme Director

Reporting to the Director, the Programme Director co-ordinates long-term development and emergency relief programmes in Asia and Africa with a team of eleven staff in Hong Kong and offices in China, Vietnam and Cambodia. Responsibilities include management and administration, staff development, and policy and strategic planning. The Programme Director will represent Oxfam Hong Kong on programme matters in Oxfam International, in international development circles and with the media.

Essential requirements for this position include:

- ◆ Several years experience in poverty alleviation or emergency relief work.
- ◆ Gender-aware management, administration and human resource development experience, preferably with non-governmental organizations.
- ◆ Willingness to travel frequently, sometimes to remote areas.
- ◆ Good communication, reporting and negotiating skills in English.
- ◆ Commitment to Oxfam's goals.

Knowledge of Chinese would be highly desirable. Current salary scale is HK$38,500-$44,677 per month.

Please send your application and C.V. to the Assistant to the Director, Oxfam Hong Kong, 9/F1. 191 Woosung Street, Jordan, Kowloon, Hong Kong or by fax to 2527-6307. Closing date for applications: 5 November 1997. Interviews will be held in HK on 26-28 November.



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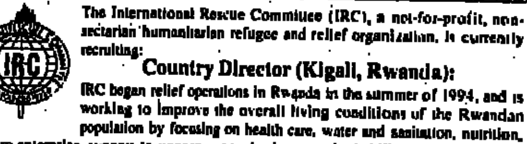
The MSc is for people who want to make sense of their contribution to the world and who would like to learn whilst maintaining career and other responsibilities. Modules include: World Futures, World Economy, Nation State and International Policy, Understanding the Policy Process, International Organisations, and Skills for Policy.

For further details, please contact:

Graduate Course Secretariat, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Bristol. BS8 4EA. UK. Tel: +44 117 974 1117
Fax: +44 117 973 7308. E-mail: Sarah.Harding@bris.ac.uk

Entrance requirements: 2nd class Honours Degree or equivalent professional qualifications and/or experience.

• An international centre for education and research •



The International Rescue Committee (IRC), a not-for-profit, non-sectarian humanitarian refugee and relief organization, is currently recruiting:

Country Director (Kigali, Rwanda):

IRC began relief operations in Rwanda in the summer of 1994, and is working to improve the overall living conditions of the Rwandan population by focusing on health care, water and sanitation, nutrition, micro-enterprise, support to unaccompanied minors, and rehabilitation assistance to residents and returnees. The Country Director manages an approximately $8 million budget (18 grants), 22 expatriate, and over 250 local staff. ***Requirements:*** MA or MS degree in related field, at least five years of international work experience; previous supervisory experience; previous budget and fiscal oversight responsibilities; excellent communications skills, strong written and verbal French skills. Position is for 1-2 years. Contact Susan Richl, E-mail: susanr@intrescom.org; fax:212-551-3170

Country Director (Baku, Azerbaijan):

IRC provides emergency relief supplies, shelter/infrastructure rehabilitation, income generation, and public health services to refugees and internally displace people in Azerbaijan.

Responsibilities: oversee the implementation of programs in Azerbaijan; monitor, develop and report on programs (to IRC and donors): represent IRC to local governments; donors and international agencies.

Requirements: graduate degree in related field, 3-5 years overseas management experience in refugee relief or development. Position is for 12 months.

Contact: andrew Robarts email:andrew@intrescom.org. Fax: 212-551-3170

Eastern Africa Regional Office

IUCN
The World Conservation Union

Technical Advisor
District Environmental Planning
Mt Elgon Conservation and Development Project, Phase 111

The Eastern Africa Regional Office Of IUCN - The World Conservation Union seeks to recruit a Technical Advisor, District Environmental Planning to work with the Mt Elgon Conservation and Development Project in Uganda, a project supporting the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The oject aims to conserve the biodiversity of Mt Elgon National Park and promote sustainable development initiatives in communities adjacent to the National Park to alleviate pressure on park resources.

The Technical Advisor will play a catalytic and facilitating role, by placing emphasis on strengthening capacity within District Administration staff, to formulate and implement sub-county and district environmental plans. Environmental plans will be based on the state of the district resource base, address environmental degradation processes, and introduce a strategy for sustainable natural resource use which conserves the natural resources while addressing the development needs of the District.

The candidate must have a relevant postgraduate degree and at least seven years relevant professional experience. He/she should have:

- demonstrated expertise and experience in land use planning, natural resource assessment and management, and environmental monitoring
- demonstrated expertise and experience in participatory approaches to planning
- an understanding of environmental economics and Government development planning
- demonstrated ability to identify training needs and to plan and implement participatory training and extension programs.
- excellent communication skills
- familiarity with working in the developing world, preferably in Africa
- demonstrated capacity to work as part of a multidisciplinary team
- experience and skills in database management and analysis

The DEPA is a two-year position based in the Mt. Elgon Conservation and Development Project office in Mbale

Applicants should send letters of application, detailed curriculum vitae and names of three professional referees to: The Regional Representative, IUCN Eastern Africa Regional Office, P.O. Box 68200, Nairobi, Kenya or fax 252 2 890615 by 5th November, 1997. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted

---

Center Director

Center for Wildlife Management Studies - Athi River, Kenya
Center for Wetland Studies - Baja, Mexico
Center for Marine Resources - South Caicos, British West Indies
Center for Rainforest Studies - Yungaburra, Queensland, Australia

START DATE: JANUARY 1998

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QUALIFICATIONS: PhD or Masters in a relevant field, 5 + years of demonstrated upper level management experience, entrepreneurial ability, and proven experience with the following: institution building; fundraising; teaching college aged students; budget management, project management; giving presentations; running academic or similar programs; and heading environmental issue driven projects, programs or organizations. Must have the desire and drive to develop and head a school along with the ability to articulate the direction for the Center and the ability to travel up to 50% of the time and the lifestyle to live on site the other times. Experience of working and living in Kenya, Australia, Baja Mexico or the Caribbean under field conditions preferred.

TO APPLY: Send a detailed letter explaining research experience, interests and skills, CV with names and telephone numbers of 3 references to:

Trudy Cullen
Center Director Search
The School for Field Studies
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Business as usual at the one-stop arms shop

Britain's 'new trade values' count for little at arms fairs held on government land. **John Vidal** investigates

OUTSIDE the perimeter fence of Farnborough airfield, 60 people are listening to a woman reciting the names of Guatemalan political prisoners who have been tortured. "Mario Sanchez . . . Jorge Alberto . . . Gilberto Caal . . ."

Inside the Ministry of Defence property, well out of sight of the road, the annual Copex arms fair is getting under way. Delegates to the Contingency and Operational Procurement Exhibition are being bused in and out.

I have posed as a French security consultant eager to do business at the fair, which is off limits to press and public. I have sent two faxes with the letterheading of an imaginary Paris firm. It is enough to get in with a ham French accent and a copy of Le Monde.

"Bomber", head security honcho, drives me and four guards to the site. He is preparing evacuation procedures as if a siege were in progress. Shouting orders into a mobile phone, he deploys dark-suited men to different gates. There are security searches that would shame El Al. No recording equipment, bugging devices, cameras or protesters, thank you.

The venue is a 100-metre rigid tent with 100 middle-aged men in black drinking and eating heavily at both ends. I am the only man in shades. There are lots of earrings and personal jewellery, bellies, and white shirts on show. In between, 145 exhibitors from around the world are showing their kit to military special forces, border patrols, corporate security men, government agencies, rapid response departments, logistic groups, minesweepers, and what are euphemistically called "internal security" groups. The Copex catalogue boasts exhibits for "penetration/insertion security", "counter narcotics", "armour and ballistics", "pyrotechnics" and "counter insurgency". South Koreans, Chinese, Ugandans, Kuwaitis and Singaporeans mix with Brummies and clipped voice mandarin-types.



Protesters outside the perimeter fence of Farnborough airfield in England, where the Copex arms fair took place PHOTO: GARRY WEASER

I have a notional £100,000. What can I buy for a bunch of security-obsessed East Europeans? The prices are ballistic. How about a portable sleeping policeman which can be electronically triggered to produce razor-sharp blades? Prices slashed to £13,000. Big in Germany.

"Very good for border guards," says the MD of Catsclaw Ltd.

"And corporations?"

"Of course."

A man selling revolving target systems for up to £5 million bewails the demise of British gun clubs. Now he has to deal mainly with big spenders such as the police.

A man with a knife is dressed up in hood, groin and body armour and is being eyed up by a man with a gun. "Come on!" he shouts. It is, says a salesman, close quarter training for "real-time situation incidents". The two men grapple and four shots ring out. It's only paint.

But where are the bombs and torture equipment? "Off ticket," says a blunt northerner eyeing up computer surveillance gear.

Across the aisle, the man from the Ultimate Handcuff Company offers eight brands of cuff. "You have them for the legs?" He says he is strictly an arms man.

"My clients have a problem that the handcuffs they use show bruises. What do you recommend?" Easy. Rubber liners at £6 a pair.

To another vendor: "Do you have any CS gas?"

"Is that like mustard gas? I thought it was illegal here, that's why we didn't bring any." But he has an export business. "Call me," he says. "We can get most things."

No one is impressed by the Princess Diana anti-mine campaign, intergovernmental treaties or Labour's new ethical foreign policy. "It's business as usual. The trade goes on in anything you want," says a man selling Bosnia-tested minesweepers.

Cattle prods, electric shock batons, manacles and other human rights abuse gear is out. Hi-tech is in. Bugs are taking over as corporations and governments become increasingly paranoid about outsiders and insiders. There are now anti-bugs and anti-anti-bugs, bugs for private and public property. Rice grain-sized transmitters can be followed anywhere in the world, by computer, by satellite, or global information systems.

What about bugging fax machines? "Is the enemy within or without the office, sir?" a man asks. He recommends a £20,000 machine. "It is strictly for the authorities, but you know if you have a lot of money, anything is possible."

Even as Tony Blair is calling on Britain to become a "beacon for the world", quite legal orders are being taken for British-made mortar launchers, voice-print truth phones, grenades, disruptor cannon, carbon dioxide guns, small arms, explosives, blasting machines and civilian surveillance systems.

It is 5.30 and we are all ushered out on to government Tarmac and into buses. Beyond the gates, anti-arms trade campaigners prepare for their overnight vigil. Tibetan monks, Kurds and East Timorese tie peace pennants to the fence.

Two Copex delegates listen to the radio news. Tony Blair is heard saying that the Government has new values. "Nice one," says one with a smile.

Letter from Bamako

Robert Lacville

Grey areas

MY FRIEND Coulibaly has just moved house. He has left the suburbs and returned to live with his mother. Coulibaly's wife and three children are now squashed into three rooms and a tiny yard. The spacious four-bedroom villa he built from consultancy fees is looking for a tenant. "I am the eldest son," he explained, "and our traditions are strong. My mother did not wish to leave the house or the street where she has always lived. So it was up to me to return to look after her when my father died."

I visited the new installations. Although Madame Coulibaly assured me that everything was fine, it was clear she was suffering. Even cooking is pretty cramped in her new courtyard. To cheer her up, her husband has planned with an architect to build three more rooms upstairs as soon as the finances allow. No one in the family questions the decision to move back into town: duty to one's mother is sacred.

Our friend Cathy's mother came to stay. She is 82 years old, but she comes every year to Bamako, leaving her safe garden suburb in Southern Indiana, USA for the wilds of West Africa. Mother has to change aeroplanes at least twice, so Cathy routes her through the easiest and warmest airports — Mother cannot take the cold. She cannot take the heat either, so when she is in Bamako she survives on air-conditioning. But we take her around during the cool season (late November until February), or in the evenings when she is always the queen of the *soirée*. Naturally, everyone defers to her age and seniority and she is a great charmer. But there is also another factor explaining her popularity. "It is so wonderful to see you with your mother, Cathy," explained a Malian friend. "Very few white people bring their parents with them. We hear that old people in Europe and America are all shut away in homes. That is very shocking for us. You are different because your mother is here with you."

This reminds me of the reactions of a group of Africans I escorted around Geneva one year. Geneva, of course, is one of the world's wealthy cities. The African delegates goggled at the luxurious shops and gasped at the even more stupendous prices. They admired the medieval city and the cathedral; they loved the lake and the elegant boulevards. Our hosts took us to an *auberge* for dinner and we had a feast. Near the restaurant was a large, well-lit building. An African colleague asked what it was. "Oh, that is just an old people's home," came the reply.

The African delegates were astonished. Questions were asked, explanations given. Finally the eldest member of the delegation summed up: "We have seen the wealth of your city, the beautiful buildings, the lake and the mountains, the luxury hotels and the universal electric lighting. But if this is how you treat your elders, then your are living in a state of spiritual and social poverty, and we envy you nothing."

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

***HOW* does a spider get its first thread across wide spaces without intervening support?**

THERE are at least three methods used by spiders to span such gaps, but they all depend on a fine gossamer thread being wafted by air currents until it becomes fixed at some point.

In the first case the spider simply points its spinnerets to the wind, emitting a fine gossamer silk which is carried away. The spider tests this every so often and if it appears to be anchored uses it as the bridge thread for a new web.

Alternatively, while issuing the gossamer, the spider also lowers itself to the ground on a somewhat thicker support line and once there tests the gossamer to see if it has achieved a connection. Or, the spider attaches both the gossamer and the support line to the original site and lowers itself to the ground, where it releases that end of the gossamer and climbs back up the support line to retrieve the fixed end of the gossamer and test it to see if a bridge has been formed. — *Gus McNaughton, Otley, West Yorkshire*

***WHICH* is more intelligent, my seven-month-old baby or my seven-year-old cat?**

IT DEPENDS on your understanding of intelligence. Your cat will outdo your baby on "what a cat needs to know" specialities, whereas your baby will excel in "appropriate responses to silly human faces and sounds" subjects. Your cat probably thinks it is more intelligent than you! — *Megan Cupid, Birmingham*

YOUR CAT. If you abandoned both right now, only the cat could survive without your help. — *Christine Brandon-Jones, London*

***WHEN* does a gem cross the line between semi-precious and precious?**

WHEN the supply of a worthless mineral reaching the market is artificially restricted by De Beers. — *Art Hilgart, Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA*

PROFESSIONAL jewellers have stopped using these terms. Previously, "precious" stones were understood to be diamond, ruby, emerald, sapphire and pearl, with perhaps black opal and alexandrite. "Semi-precious" stones were peridot, aquamarine, topaz, tourmaline, zircon and amethyst. Now the term "gemstones" is used to describe both categories. A fine topaz worth thousands of dollars could hardly be described as half-precious. — *Anthony de Goutière, Victoria, BC, Canada*

***WHY* are Anglo-Saxons exceedingly tight-lipped about the size of their earnings?**

THIS stems from the belief that the walls have ears — and work for the Inland Revenue. — *K K Datta, Calcutta, India*

PERIODICALLY, French magazines publish revelations about who earns how much. The articles will invariably begin something like: "Mentioning how much you earn is a big taboo in France. Unlike the Anglo-Saxons, who are much more open about it . . ." — *Maryse Petros, Toulouse, France*

Any answers?

***I CAN'T* remember having a "square meal". Can someone explain this expression?** — *J Coldwell, Herzebrock-Clarholz, Germany*

***WHAT'S* the difference between a herb and a spice?** — *Gareth Hyett, Manchester*

***WHICH* is the the worse for the environment — the destruction of the Brazilian rainforest or the American use of resources?** — *Bryn Jones, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Vanishing forests loss of the world's original tree cover

Remaining closed forest cover
Estimated original forest cover

Forest facts

- 62% of world's total forest cover lost
- 97% of UK's native woodland lost
- Europe has lost 62% of original forest cover
- Only 2 per cent of Europe's remaining forest is protected
- Even before the Indonesia fires 88% of Asia-Pacific region forest's had been lost
- WWF and World Bank are calling on all countries to protect a minimum of 10% of all forest types in their borders by 2000

Source: World Wildlife Fund

World's forests vanishing

Paul Brown

TWO-THIRDS of the world's forests have been lost for ever, and they are being cut down and burned at an ever increasing rate with an area the size of England and Wales disappearing each year, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) revealed last week.

The new figures are far worse than previously thought. The Asia Pacific region, where fires are raging in Indonesia, had lost 88 per cent of its forest cover even before the current disaster.

Francis Sullivan, who launched the report, says only 2 per cent of the world's forests are protected. Yet at least 10 per cent of each forest type needs to be saved to have any hope of preventing mass destruction of species that live there.

With the support of the World Bank, the WWF is urging all governments to pledge to protect 10 per cent of their forests by the end of the century. For some countries such as Britain it is too late, with 97 per cent already destroyed. British woodland continues to be lost.

The disturbing figures are compiled by the World Conservation Monitoring Centre at Cambridge and are based on what scientists believe would have been world forest cover 8,000 years ago, before humans started to clear them for agriculture. It is the first time a comprehensive assessment has been carried out.

Apart from the extinction of species caused by the loss of forests, the local climate is being altered. Mr Sullivan says: "In the case of the Indonesian fires the smog problem will be replaced by others when the rains finally come. Soil and ash will be washed into rivers clogging them, killing the fish and causing flooding."

Garo Batmanian, a conservationist from Brazil, says: "We are not trying to put a fence round the Amazon or any other forest. OK, they are good for biodiversity, but they are good for people too, they make a good living out of them. All sorts of forest products can be harvested without destroying the forest.

"In Brazil, we regularly suffer flooding now because there are no trees to soak up the water. Five years after the forest is cut down the land is useless and the ranchers move on to new forest areas. We are proud of hosting the Earth Summit and signing all the agreements but we did not keep our promises. The rate of forest destruction and the loss of species continues to accelerate," he says.

WWF is keen to emphasise that the destruction of forests is a worldwide phenomenon. Among the worst offenders is Europe.

The report highlights the problem of the Glen Feshie estate in Scotland, one of the few remnants of ancient Caledonian pine forest. Even though it has legal protection as a national nature reserve and is proposed as a special area for conservation by the European Union, it is being destroyed as a result of overgrazing by deer. Martin Mathers, policy officer from WWF Scotland, says: "Because Man regards stalking deer as sport the area has been packed with red deer, which eat every young tree. A survey shows that there is not one tree in the forest under 130 years old. As a result the forest is dying, yet it is supposed to be protected."

A giant beep for mankind

Martin Walker cracks the pager codes used by teenagers in the US

THE beeper hooked on to your belt sounds. Check the little digital display and it reads 121. One to one. It means I want to talk to you alone. Then comes the next digital burst: 007. James Bond's number. That means I've got a secret. It is followed by 21. In homage to the legendary New York bar, that means let's go for a drink. Then comes 8.30, to fix the time.

End of message. And dawn of a revolution in communications, the new Morse code for the digital age. Naturally, it is American. Equally naturally, it began as a teenage thing, and the teens are starting to complicate the codes further now that parents and adults are learning and using the new language.

Beepers began with doctors. Then came the drug dealers. But just as the cops started to assume that the little beepers on the belt meant a possible narcotics arrest, they became teenage fashion statements. Beepers are also a lot cheaper than cell phones. They now come in all colours. Day-Glo pink and leopardskin are popular

There are now 50 million beepers in use in the United States. After a customer survey by the biggest manufacturer, Motorola, it is now reckoned that more than 8 million are owned by teenagers. Motorola now sends out notes on beeper etiquette.

"Don't pull your pager out and check it in class, during religious services, or other inappropriate times," it counsels.

The New York education department bans them in class, and confiscated 3,103 in the last six months of 1996. Since you can get beepers almost free if you sign up for a year's service at $6.95 a month, few students bother to reclaim them.

"We see this being 60 million or more over the next couple of years. The majority of that will be driven by teens and families, not business users," says Doug Kemp, of Dallas-based Page-mart, one of the biggest dealers.

"We love it," grins Todd Felker of telecommunications giant AT&T, which has gleefully seen the coming of beeper boutiques and the increasingly popular guide books to the communications codes.

Inevitably, the phenomenon is starting to attract academic attention, not just for the innovative linguistics, but for the way it modernises a traditional form of adolescent behaviour.

"When kids page each other, they thumb their nose at authority by using the latest technology," says Daniel Gensler, director of child, adolescent and family services at Manhattan's postgraduate centre for mental health. He sees it as healthy, even empowering for young people, and he sees the swift transmission of the codes throughout a far-flung age group as a natural development of teenage slang. What is new, however, is the technology-driven transition for alphabetic to numeric communication.

Beeper codes started with a logical development of school games with digital numbers on electronic calculators. Turn the screen upside down, and 07734 reads "Hello"; 1134 2 09 reads "Go to Hell"

Swiftly translated on to beeper screens, the digital messages have now spawned a language. Tele-parents who bought the beepers for the kids as form of electronic leash found it useful to learn enough of the lingo to send messages.

Stuck in traffic on the way to pick up a child, parents can use the beeper to send 87 1 — "I late"

Many of the messages are specific to US culture. The year of the American revolution, 1776, means you are really revolting; 66 means let's hit the road, from Route 66. From the old TV show about Beverly Hills high school, 90210 means you are a snob. Thanks to Christopher Columbus, 1492 means let's go sailing. From the name of the infamous income tax form, 1040 means "You owe me big time". The cruellest code of all is 30. In teenspeak, it means "That's so old, it's history".

Down and out in south London

CINEMA
Richard Williams

THE FIRST half-hour of Nil by Mouth is like staring at a pile of unexploded bombs, wondering which of them is going to go off first. Actually, there's not much doubt. Raymond (Ray Winstone) is the biggest and craziest of this group of minor villains from a south London estate, with the shortest fuse. And when he blows his top, he detonates a series of explosions that will echo in the heads of all who see this exhausting, disturbing and, I think, very important film.

Raymond frightens us just by the way he orders a round of drinks. When he tells his wife that he's going out for "a bit of mooching about", he and his mates get wired and head up west for the night. Skittering from amusement arcade to strip club, they turn Soho into a giant pinball machine. And with the booze and the drugs inside him, Raymond's mechanisms of social control are disabled. He's ready to let fly with a murderous rage.

The most terrifying moment, the sequence that will define anyone's overall reaction to the film, comes halfway through, when Raymond really loses it. On the sort of ridiculous pretext that may occur all too readily to a drunk man, he beats his pregnant wife, Val (Kathy Burke), into a miscarriage. We don't see the blows. But at the preview I went to, there were gasps and sobs as his boot went in. Afterwards Raymond stands over her, shifting his weight from foot to foot, fiddling with the waistband of his boxer shorts in a kind of defiant uncertainty. Part of him thinks that what he's just done was all right. The other part of him knows the truth, however dimly.

This is not a reflection of the home life of the average British citizen. Its authenticity, however, is beyond question. Gary Oldman wrote Nil By Mouth. He also produced and directed it. Half of the $4 million budget came out of his own pocket, from the proceeds of his roles in the likes of JFK, True Romance, The Fifth Element and Air Force One. He's a recovered alcoholic, and the son of an alcoholic. It's personal, in other words. And Ray Winstone's Raymond is the prism through which Oldman chooses to show us the life he observed as a child, growing up on an estate like the one that imprisons this family.

No one, then, can legitimately deny the truth of what we are seeing. But without art, authenticity doesn't mean much. And in his first directorial effort, one in which he depends very largely on his own resources, Oldman brings visual flair and dramatic judgment to bear on a story that could easily have got out of hand.

The look of the film is based, according to its designer, Hugo Luczyc-Wyhowski, on the work of the photographers Paul Graham and Nick Waplington; to which I would add the unvarnished domestic photography of Richard Billingham, one of the most widely noticed elements of the Sensation show at the Royal Academy in London.

The pre-dawn blue, the pond-slime green and the sodium yellow form a perfect palette — but the director of photography, Ron Fortunato, manages to resist the temptation to cosmeticise the action, except when there is a purpose in mind. One unforgettable shot of the estate fills the screen with its bland modernist geometry, mocking the clean beauty which the original architect must have envisaged 40 years ago when he closed his eyes and dreamed of Mies Van Der Rohe and an urban utopia. And when Billy, Val's junkie brother, stalks through the buildings, the camera follows him in a lovely long, fluid take.



Poetic vision . . . Gong Li in the spectacular Temptress Moon

Winstone is the dark heart of the film, along with Burke. Their combustible relationship is the current episode of a serial dysfunction: we can see how her grandmother, Kath (Edna Dore), and her mother, Janet (Laila Morse), went through variations of the same thing, and it is with a sense of dread that we watch their small daughter Michelle (Leah Fitzgerald) being prepared for the same fate.

By contrast, Raymond has no such example of survival to follow. In a maudlin soliloquy towards the end of the film, he tells his friend Mark (Jamie Foreman) about how his mother once carried his father's dinner over to the pub on a tray, saying that since that was where he lived, he might as well eat there. This is a true story: the mother and father were Oldman's.

It is the film's only real weakness that all the women are portrayed, in their various cracked and battered ways, as angels. But that, too, is probably how Oldman saw it. Burke is, as usual, extraordinary, wiping away her troubles with that lovely woozy smile and taking her old gran in her arms for a dance around the living-room floor. And after Janet has given Billy (Charlie Creed-Miles) a lift to his dealer, she makes him get out of the front seat and climb into the back of the old van to shoot up the smack for which her "loan" has paid. The neighbours might see.



Junk culture: Charlie Creed-Miles in Nil By Mouth

What's the point of a film like this? What's the social value? Léos Carax's Les Amants du Pont Neuf showed us that those who lie in the gutter can still look at the stars in each other's eyes. John Singleton's Boyz N The Hood and Matthieu Kassovitz's La Haine reminded us that gang members are as human and various as, say, our elected representatives. By saying that there are people surviving even this level of degradation, by offering not nihilism but the nearest thing to realism that cinema can achieve, Nil By Mouth identifies itself as an honourable film, as well as a sensational one.

IF YOU want to leave a cinema feeling half-drowned in beauty, go and see Chen Kaige's **Temptress Moon**. See it twice, in fact: once for the ravishing visuals and another time to try to work out what the director is trying to tell us. On neither count will you be wasting your time.

Although the film is set in a pivotal era of Chinese history, the 10 years following the abdication of the Emperor and the establishment of the republic in 1911, it doesn't aim for the grand sweep of Chen's last work, Farewell My Concubine. In that majestic piece, the three principal characters were used to illustrate the wider drama of their time. Here, the telescope is reversed: once again there is a trio of leads, but now Chen and his fellow scenarists are interested in the effect of history on individual destinies.

First we see them as children. Zhongliang is a poor relation who comes to live at the country estate of his brother-in-law, Zhengda. There he is seduced by his sister, Xiuyi, who persuades him to forget his studies and use his time in preparing her husband's opium pipe. Ruyi is Zhengda's wilful little sister; the diffident Duanwu is their cousin.

Ten years later, we discover that Zhengda has lost his mind and the elders of the estate are calling upon the grown-up Ruyi (Gong Li) to take over — a sign of social change. Zhongliang (Leslie Cheung), his ability to love apparently destroyed by his first sexual experience, is now to be found among the bars and dance-halls of Shanghai, an exquisite gigolo seducing rich married women who are then blackmailed by fellow members of his gang.

Sent back by the gang boss to try the same trick on Ruyi, Zhongliang finds himself falling for her — only to be astonished by the discovery that she has prepared herself for him by practising sex with the equally discombobulated Duanwu. Once again he disappears. The complexities of the slow-burning progress towards a comfortless denouement, and the elucidation of clues carefully planted along the way, sometimes make the intricate plot difficult to follow. But in the end Temptress Moon resolves itself with a satisfying logic, while also presenting its audience with a more profound meditation on love and duty in a time of change.

The chronology allows Chen to make a dramatic virtue of the moods and images of China in the early part of the century. His art director, Huang Qiagui, exploits the contrast between the traditional costumes and environments of the family estate and the European clothes and neon lighting of downtown Shanghai as the characters move back and forth on the cusp of a new world.

But for all the anguished elegance of Cheung and the compelling spectacle of Gong Li's unique half-moon lips, the real star of the film is the cinematographer, Christopher Doyle, whose work with the Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wei (Days Of Being Wild, Chungking Express, Fallen Angels) attracted great admiration and who seizes the chance here to create an unashamedly poetic vision.

Doyle shoots his close-ups in the style of recent magazine portraiture: the centre of the subject's face in sharp focus, blurring away to the edges. He uses the Steadicam to follow the action with balletic grace and swiftness.

He makes objects — leather slippers, an ivory and silver opium pipe, a safety razor — into things you could worship. He uses colour — the indigo of the estate elders' robes, the neutrals of Zhongliang's Western linen suits — with a painter's eye.

Temptress Moon may not be a masterpiece. But cinema was invented so that people like Chen and Doyle could play together the way they do here.

Loo's change of capitalism

THEATRE
Michael Billington

WORK. It used to be British theatre's dirtiest four-letter word. But a whole succession of plays have finally put it on stage, from Arnold Wesker's The Kitchen and David Storey's The Contractor to comedies such as Michael Frayn's Make And Break.

So Michel Vinaver's Overboard, a vast three-and-a-half-hour play with a cast of 20 staged by Sam Walters at the Orange Tree in Richmond, Surrey, is less of a shock than it might once have been. This Aristophanic comedy, about an American conglomerate's takeover of a French family-run toilet-paper manufacturer, was written in the late sixties. Much of the play is still grimly funny, not least when it touches on the myth-making power of marketing. But in a sense it has been overtaken by events. Not only are we used to work plays, but we live in a cut-throat economy where medium-sized firms are daily devoured by monopolistic corporations.

Vinaver's play is long (seven hours in its original form), capricious and self-indulgent. Even so, I welcome its revival as part of a season of French theatre, if only because it puts a process on stage: it shows how capitalism works. We see the ailing bog-roll firm dressing up the same old product with a new name, surviving a boardroom putsch and re-launching itself with the aid of American marketing consultants.

Much the sharpest and funniest scenes are those showing the American whizz-kids at work. They force the polite French to confront the fundamental nature of their product. They engage in dollar-book Freud ("shitting is a forbidden pleasure") and pass on textbook law ("marketing is the male; the consumer is the female"). "Religion, art and literature," they triumphantly proclaim, "will pass into the background. Man's creativity will find refuge in marketing."

Although written in the late sixties, this is terrifyingly apposite for the late nineties, when even political parties are sold like soap-powders. But Vinaver is not content simply to write a satire on capitalism. He draws parallels between the internecine rivalries of Norse myth and the modern business community and contrasts the controlled experiments of the Nazi death camps with the artistic Happenings of the sixties avant-garde.

Yet I cannot help warming to a play that unmasks the capitalist process and has people arguing on the streets outside the theatre. Sam Walters's production of Gideon Lester's translation, incorporating mime, ballet and even a jazz trio, also keeps the play's numerous plot-strands visible and marshals a huge cast with great skill. Vinaver's play is great, baggy monster; but, at a time when drama is in danger of retreating into the domestic and international monopolies go unchallenged, his reckless ambition is still salutary.

Bareback riders . . . the dizzying Bernadetje PHOTO: KURT VAN DER ERST

Fairground attraction

Lyn Gardner marvels at the cult performance Bernadetje, a mix of divinity and dodgem cars

THERE was a time when I was no longer a child, but not yet a grown-up, when my undisputed favourite day out was a trip to Dreamland in Margate followed by evensong at Canterbury Cathedral.

It was not so very far from the sweaty, dangerous, posturing glamour of the fairground to the cool, shadowy cathedral where moon-faced choirboys looked slyly from under their long lashes as they sang like angels.

I suddenly thought of this watching Bernadetje, which is currently touring Britain. Bernadetje is a miraculous rites-of-passage tale set on a fairground dodgem track, in which sexual awakening is suffused with religious fervour. It makes St Theresa's secret rapture seem pretty ordinary.

To a score which intercuts a Bach mass with Prince and Elizabeth Schwarzkopf and Kathleen Ferrier with Pia Zadora and Germaine Jackson, the young cast, most of them still at school, recreate the aimless, restless, aggressive energy of a day spent hanging around the fairground.

They squabble and swagger, pose and ride the dodgems with a desperate disregard for danger, sweeping the floor with their bodies and nimbly avoiding what seems like the inevitable crunch of metal against flesh and bone.

Among them wanders a small figure, neglected by her mother and old before her years, who is wearing a white communion dress and has a garland of flowers in her hair — a child surveying the adult world who periodically raises her eyes heavenwards, as if seeing beautiful visions.

But what is really beautiful is the performance, created by writer Arne Sierens and the choreographer Alain Platel. Sierens and Platel both grew up near the Ghent village of Oostaker, probably the only place in the world which boasts a fairground slap bang next to a copy of the grotto at Lourdes, where the 14-year-old Bernadette, a girl on the brink of womanhood, saw her visions of the Virgin Mary. Clearly the Ghent town planners knew a thing or two about the intimate relationship between sex and God.

Sierens likes to describe Bernadetje as "surfing on chaos" and stresses that "there is no story, just an extreme of emotions". Attractive although this may make it sound, it belies the disciplined, tightly choreographed nature of the performance and its rippling undercurrents, from which you can take many interlocking narratives and meanings.

What is evident is that the piece really does have what Platel calls "a golden layer", a mixture of lights, music and sheer physical sweat which is as entrancing for the viewer as it is for the performers.

The lights above the scooter track flash neon blue and pink, the beat of the music takes over like a hypnotic trance, the dodgem cars begin to spin and suddenly you are 15 again: self-absorbed, strutting your stuff in front of the mirror, utterly invincible and totally vulnerable at the same time.

"It is difficult to resist what is going on on the stage because the actors are just being themselves. It is raw, not just a copy of daily life," says Platel, who, together with Sierens, developed the piece with the performers, only a few of them professionals, over an intensive three-month period of improvisation.

Platel is right. The beauty of the piece is that for an audience the experience is utterly real, like watching real life in real time. But theatrically it operates on the level of hyper-realism. It is always much more than it ever appears to be.

"We couldn't recreate this piece with another group," says Sierens. "We don't work with individuals, we work with the company and the chemistry of that company. For me, as a theatre-maker, it is the first time I have seen on stage the dramaturgy of a group. For us it is a manifesto about how theatre must work its creators."

Yet judging by the response across Europe, it works for audiences too. The show has achieved a cult status with groups of young people following it over international boundaries. But what is it that attracts them? The high energy and pure emotion of the piece?

"I think it is more. It is like a ritual feast or a pilgrimage," says Platel. "It's easy and funny to watch, but it is also the blackest, most tragic theatre that I have ever made."

Tragic, but never downbeat. The characters may be losers in life but they are the rulers of the dodgem track. It is only when the music swells, the lights dim and the cars race, that they come truly alive. They arch their bodies and appear to swing through space, like glamorous bareback riders, passing from car to car. They step out into the thin air and they dare to fall. It is the grand gesture from the small people: beautiful, futile, utterly desperate.

You have come to the right party

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

I HAVE educated myself in the intervals between TV programmes, as Osbert Sitwell did in the holidays from Eton. With practice, quite large novels can be ingested at a gulp. Even so, the 12 books of A Dance to the Music of Time were a bit of a facer. It does not occur to Anthony Powell that you might have an urgent prior appointment..

Once in, it is simply absorbing. Literally so, like some huge though not particularly hungry anaconda, which swallows you in leisurely, irresistible, muscular ripples. Just imagine how it feels when first your toes, then your heels, then by gradual degrees your shins and ankles, calves and heels are slowly eaten bit by bit. The sensation is engrossing.

Hugh Whitemore's version for Channel 4 is essentially perfectly faithful, which is more than you can say for most of the characters. If this is a snake, it's a pedigree racing snake. You can put your shirt on it.

The sheer size and subtlety of Dance has seen off several screenwriters. Whitemore has arranged 12 novels into four two-hour films. Whitemore describes his method as reducing the sauce. It concentrates the essence and a little goes a long way.

The first film started — and you can't fault his instinct — with Jean (Claire Skinner) opening the door naked to her lover, Nicholas Jenkins (James Purefoy). She looks like a pink nymph. Probably a Mayfair nymph, as she still wears a pair of pearl earrings. Nicholas, who is forever re-tying his shoelaces, is clearly more buttoned-up. As the film and their love affair and their youth end, she dances, still naked, sadly and slowly in his arms. She has a beautiful, paintable back.

The plum in Powell's pudding is Widmerpool (Simon Russell Beale), who clearly began life as the fat owl of the Remove then started disconcertingly to grow. He is a cuckoo who pushes more elegant birds out of the nest. While we are on the subject of birds, it was Widmerpool who was first described as "so wet you could shoot snipe off him".

Endless indignities and ill-fitting hats are heaped on Widmerpool's head, but he rises from the ashes of his humiliation fitter, fatter and better-informed than ever. The large and starry cast are democratically listed in alphabetical order (John Gielgud following Edward Fox) but in reality Simon Russell Beale's name, like Abou Ben Adhem's, will lead all the rest.

The sight of John Gielgud in a small smoking cap, melodiously fluting about the iniquities of critics, is always a comfort. It reassures you that you've come to the right party. Gielgud's here, everybody. It's the right address. Come in . . . Make yourself at home . . . Meet Alan Bennett and Edward Fox. Sarah Badel, Zoë Wanamaker, Eileen Atkins, Miranda Richardson and, oh, simply everybody will be along shortly.

There is the oddest, dreamlike quality about the book and, to some extent, the film. Characters like Uncle Giles (Edward Fox), a black sheep in a brown bowler, appear in unlikely places, mention they are having trouble with their teeth, and vanish, leaving a disconcertingly strong impression on the air, like the Cheshire Cat's grin or the smell of Turkish tobacco.

A Dance To The Music Of Time is also the title of a painting by Poussin showing poverty, labour, riches and profligacy dancing back to back but hand in hand. One condition leading to another. Or, as my grannie used to say, "Clogs to clogs — three generations." Though that is, perhaps, more a Lowry.

Life in the slow lane

Robert Wyatt's languorous approach to making music belies its intensity. He talks to **Jonathan Romney**

FOUR months ago, Robert Wyatt became a grandfather at the age of 52, and it's fair to say that the role suits him down to the ground. It's not just that he has the right beard for the part, a long shaggy mop that he sometimes tweaks into two forks, ideal for small children to tug. It's also that he makes the kind of music you'd rather hope a grandfather would make — melancholic, quizzical and fired by a mischief that those grey-beards-in-denial the Rolling Stones could only dream of.

Wyatt started out in the 1960s, drumming and singing with English psychedelia's radical highbrows, the Soft Machine, followed by his own group Matching Mole. Then, in 1973, he fell from a fourth-floor window, breaking his back, and has been paraplegic ever since. He claims that was the making of him. "As a drummer, I was dysfunctional. I couldn't be told what to do . . . I didn't know how to function until I couldn't play drums any more, and that provided the answer."

Since then, Wyatt has forged a unique, diverse solo career. It began with a bizarre moment as a chart artist, reworking the Monkees' I'm A Believer, and took in a spell in the 1980s as purveyor of radical cover versions — from Cuban revolutionary anthems to Elvis Costello's Falklands memorial Shipbuilding, via Chic and Thelonious Monk. Then there were extraordinary LPs such as 1974's dense, harrowing Rock Bottom, setting Wyatt's racked lamentations amid a soundscape that sounded positively subaquatic.

It's been seven years since Dondestan, his last full-length record. But his new CD, Shleep, is rich, affecting and well worth the wait.

Operating, geographically and temperamentally, far off the music-business superhighway, Wyatt works at his own pace, at least when circumstances allow. "When there's fuss and bother, I stop functioning."



Robert Wyatt: Shleeping it off

The last few years have brought more than a usual amount of fuss. He recently fell out of his wheelchair, breaking both legs and losing a year's working time. "They put me in one of those wheelchairs where your legs stick straight out — and I can't play the piano sideways like Liberace."

A further problem was a psyche too finely tuned to the state of the nation. In the 1980s, Wyatt established himself as one of the more politically vociferous figures in British music. He was a member of the Communist party, until he lost faith with its attempts to repackage itself.

Political and mental burn-out eventually came in the form of a nervous collapse. "The rightwing triumphalism of the eighties got to me. The propaganda war is designed to demoralise rather than kill, and it works." It was the political animal in him that pulled him through. "I thought, look at all the good things — Mandela, all the corrupt governments like Zaire falling, and millions of vegetarians. It's very rude to all these people to be depressed."

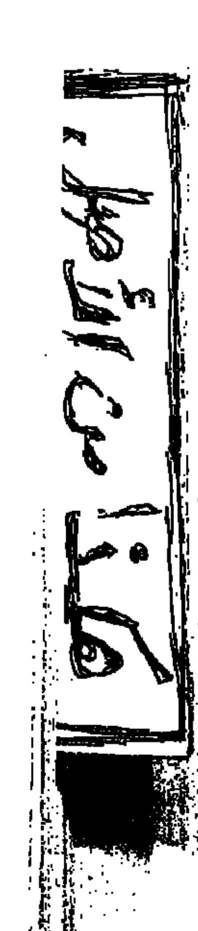
Throughout his career, Wyatt has been an adventurous collaborator, but his most consistent collaborator has been his wife Alfreda Benga, aka Alfie, who is also his manager, sleeve artist, beard-trimmer and occasional lyric writer. "She's at least the other half of the story. It's like Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo — she turned out to be the major figure of the two and I'm sure that's how it'll be with us." Shleep features several of her poems.

Although he's not one for the work ethic, Wyatt says that living with Alfie does stir him to a "husband ethic": "I occasionally have to go out and crack a bison on the head and drag it home for dinner. If it weren't for that discipline, I'd probably concentrate on getting pissed and dissolute. My heroes are people like Artaud, who absolutely refuse to participate in any way in anything they're meant to do."

If one thread of continuity runs through Wyatt's career, it's the voice, a sort of distracted conversational whine, the plaintive sound of a street seller lost in the woods. And he has gradually developed a distinctive musical language — a style of keyboard playing, drumming and, most recently, trumpet, that somehow comes across as a direct notation of his psyche. "If I see the tape as a canvas on which I'm mapping out shapes and textures, I feel totally comfortable."

Maybe it's this painterly approach that makes Wyatt's detractors see him as a figure of whimsy, a hippie dabbler. But in an industry where rhetoric rules, there's something remarkable about an artist who can produce work so traumatically raw and yet maintain a stance of amused distraction. "I don't have a particular thing about self-expression," Wyatt says. "It's just that I sometimes hear things in my head that nobody else is going to play if I don't. If it weren't for that, I'd be quite happy listening to everyone else."

Shleep is on Hannibal/Rykodisc



A slow death in a short life

John Mullan

Keats
by Andrew Motion
Faber 636pp £25

A DECADE after Keats's death, Coleridge recalled how a young man had once approached him, seized his hand, declared himself honoured to encounter the famous Mr Coleridge, and abruptly walked away. "That is Keats, the poet", a companion told him. "Heavens!" Coleridge supposedly said, "when I shook him by the hand there was death!"

Whether Coleridge's perceptiveness was real or only retrospective, this sense of youth shadowed by death has always shaped our images of Keats. This is not solely because he was only 25 when he died of consumption in Rome in 1821, his poetry still largely ignored outside a small circle of friends. It is also because intimations of mortality are so much the stuff of a poetry which is "half in love with easeful death" yet, for a suspended moment, staves off the extinction of the transient pleasures that it evokes.

The sense of impending death gives the story of Keats's life its undeniable urgency in Andrew Motion's new biography (as in previous accounts). When the poet catches a cold on the island of Mull during his 1818 walking tour of Scotland, Motion writes that "his short life started to end, and his slow death began". We are halfway through a long book, and have 300 pages left for the last three, ebbing years. Thanks largely to the journal-like letters in which, as Motion puts it, Keats "biographises himself", it is a story full of month-by-month detail. We can read Keats's own quick-witted, passionate account of his poetic ambitions, as the weeks and days narrow.

The intensity of little time is there in the poems. The best-loved of them — the great Odes, "The Eve of St Agnes", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", "To Autumn" — were all written within six months of each other in 1819. The very manuscripts display an extraordinary rapidity of invention and alteration. Thus, as well as death, there is immortality, unlikely as this would seem until long after his death. In the first half of the 19th century, his poetry seemed to be fading into obscurity.

Yet the poems, which often themselves ponder the mysteriousness of art's survival through time, do live on. The poet who instructed that his gravestone declare "Here lies one whose name was writ in water" (it does not actually give his name) has come to embody the lasting truth of beauty.

The poet "has no self", Keats wrote, for he should be losing himself in his invention, "filling some other Body". Yet his life seems inextricable from his writing and its contours will be familiar to many. The orphan son of an innkeeper, he suffered at the hands of the critics, who mocked "cockney" Keats for having to get his classical learning from dictionaries (several, including Shelley, said that the attacks hastened his death). He nursed his younger brother Tom as he died from consumption, intensifying his own sense of shortening time. Finally, there was his love for Fanny Brawne, the presiding spirit of his last poems and letters, and his bitter separation from her when his doctors told him he must travel to Italy for his health.

Motion's version of this story does not claim to be full of new discoveries. Indeed, the three influential biographies from the 1960s that authoritatively charted Keats's life, by Walter Bate, Aileen Ward and Robert Gittings, remain the bedrock of this account. Where Motion is different it is by introducing the emphases of recent scholarship. Some of this is genuinely enlightening: there is an intriguing chapter, for instance, on contemporary beliefs about consumption and its treatment. Some is more doubtful: Motion tries to adapt himself to the recent academic fashion for finding political implications in Keats's poetry.

He should have left these "new historicists" to their ingenuities. One of the lessons of this book seems to be that, while academic writing about poetry has long since retreated from the common reader, literary biography has become the only popular way of writing about literature.

Andrew Motion's Keats is a homage to a writer: what is most personal about it is Motion's extensive commentary on the writing. It seems that narrating once again the writer's life is nowadays the only accessible way of talking about what he wrote.

Childhood endurance test

Dan Jacobson

Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life
by J M Coetzee
Secker and Warburg 166pp £12.99

THIS memoir of the period between J M Coetzee's 10th and 13th years is written entirely in the third person and in the present tense. It is a mode of narration which vividly conveys to the reader the sheer unendingness of childhood — in a double sense. To the child it seems to go on for ever. The adult, on the other hand, knows that it can never be put wholly behind him, since it has made him what he is.

"Nothing", the writer says about himself as a boy growing up in the small South African town of Worcester, "leads him to think that childhood is anything but a time of gritting the teeth and enduring." He is gritting the teeth and enduring still. For something like two centuries Worcester has been a wine and fruit-growing centre in the famously fertile, beautiful Western Cape. To the young Coetzee, living with his family on an unsightly housing estate, it is a place of exile from the home he had known before in Cape Town — a locus of dust, dishonesty, cruelty and incomprehensible social and racial divisions. None of the divisions he observes in the world outside him, however, with all its uncrossable lines of colour, language and belief, cuts more deeply into him than the divisions already existing in his own heart.

The most painful of these, certainly the most obsessive, is his relationship with his mother. Of her self-sacrificing love for him he is (almost always) certain. But that is precisely the problem. Knowing that he cannot do without her, he resents the obligation to love her in return. He feels trammelled by her constant concern for him. He is irritated by the stupid and inconsistent things she says. He hates having to share her with his younger brother and his father.

How can anyone make sense of such feelings? How can he reconcile them with what he is "supposed" to feel? Must he keep himself in hiding for ever? Well, he hasn't done so. The confessions he makes here are rendered all the more intense by the dry irony, the air of implacable finality, with which they are delivered.

An Afrikaner by name and by descent on both sides of the family, his parents have brought him up as a "false English boy" who hates the Afrikaners of Worcester and fears that they will claim him as one of their own. He feels an inexplicable envy of the outcast, barefoot, Cape Coloured boys and girls he passes in the streets, and is filled with a furtive desire for their smooth limbs, even as he despairingly wonders "what desire is *for*".

Only during holidays on the farm owned by an Afrikaner uncle in the bleak Karroo, with its "landscape of ochre and grey and fawn and olive-green", its "even, blinding light that pours down from the sky" — only then, only there, does he feel at peace with himself. Or as much at peace as this boy can ever be.

He dreams of living on the farm, but an intolerable reality obtrudes once again. He wants to whisper a warning to the sheep as they are rounded up for slaughter. "But in their yellow eyes he catches a glimpse of something that silences him: a resignation, a foreknowledge . . . of what awaits them."

The reader of Boyhood cannot help wishing that its author would let up on himself occasionally. It is hard to know whether one wishes this for the sake of the unhappy child in the book or the unappeased adult writing about him. Either way, it is an index of the impact made by the story.

Another bout of hysteria

Philip Hensher

Dr Freud: A Life
by Paul Ferris
Sinclair-Stevenson 464pp £20

THE father of psychoanalysis is, at least on the borderlines of his theory, an easy man to knock down. There is the early proponence of cocaine — written when Freud was himself addicted to it. One can make a strong case that some of his early work on hysteria, too, was produced when the author was not so much off his head, as many of his contemporaries thought, as off his face.

Moreover a startling amount of Freud's work was produced on almost no clinical evidence at all. Paul Ferris has a certain amount of fun at the expense of his 1896 paper "The Aetiology of Hysteria", setting out what has come to be known as the "seduction theory". Freud abandoned this theory as quickly as he made it up, but a lot of his later work is a similar leap of intuition rather than deduction from evidence. He is supposed to have told a pupil that Totem And Taboo came to him on a wet Sunday afternoon. It shows.

A good deal of Freud's work consists of material which now has only a period interest. The seduction theory, which maintains that hysteria is invariably the result of early sexual abuse, is the most notorious example of something Freud's followers tried to keep quiet — it resurfaced in the 1980s, no more convincingly than in the 1890s. But there are some even madder corners: in the years before the first world war, it seemed rational to Freud to follow his pupils Jung and Ferenczi from explorations of the unconscious mind into speculations about the paranormal and telepathy.

Even in works more central to the Freudian corpus, wishful thinking seems to shape the evidence: Little Hans is the most incredible of the case histories, full of Oedipal remarks from the child such as "And, Daddy, when I'm married I'll only have a baby when I want to, when I'm married to Mummy; and if I don't want a baby, God won't want it either, when I'm married." This complete load of pants, as we say in south London, shaped psychoanalytical theory for too long.

But perhaps Freud's failings now seem much more startling than they really are, simply because it's almost impossible to see how original and accurate he so often was. The fundamental idea of the telling slip or omission, in The Psychopathology Of Everyday Life, is utterly uncontroversial. The role that The Interpretation Of Dreams played in shifting dream theory away from prophecy towards self-revelation is now so obvious that the book can easily seem unremarkable.

Where Freud was right, his findings have disappeared into the shared mass of ideas we all hold without even thinking about them; where he was wrong, he was spectacularly — absurdly — so. His writings endure because what he says is often, at some level, true. And his ideas became popular almost from their publication — sometimes in unpredictable style. Ferris has uncovered "the script of an unmade German movie of the period, Sensational Revelations from the Night Life of the Human Soul, [which] called for a choreographed version of Freud's Three Essays on Sexuality, the boy star Jackie Coogan as Young Oedipus and the Tiller Girls as erotic dancers".

This life of Freud can hardly be anything but enjoyable, given the almost incredible degree of squabbling which accompanied the birth of psychoanalysis and which still accompanies Freud's work and legacy. It is wonderfully full of Freud's more eccentric followers: "the gang", as he called them. The bickering with Jung and Adler and Klein is richly pleasurable, and is not skimped; it's a bickering which has been bequeathed to every Freudian, and anybody who is professionally concerned with Freud and psychoanalysis will, I dare say, examine the acknowledgments and the bibliography before deciding whether this is a book worth noticing.

Paperbacks

Nicholas Lezard

He Died With a Felafel in His Hand, by John Birmingham (Flamingo, £5.99)

ONE OF the depressing things some publishers do, and it never works, is try to translate the idioms of one Anglophone country to those of another; not here. This is an Australian book, and all the funnier for it. I don't know why "watching the teev" is funnier than watching TV, but there you go. Anyway, the slang lifts it up from the amusing toilet-book category.

It's all about the horrors of house-sharing, and the suffering caused by all the zipper-heads, dickheads and no-hopers who seem to be the only kind of flatmates you can get in Australian cities. (I am not quite sure what a zipper-head is, but it is probably not nice.) Rats are found dead beneath six inches of compacted rubbish in the living room, the mould grows mould and, as the title says, one junky is found dead in his room with a felafel in his hand. It is an epic of squalor and degradation. Deserves to be a hit.

Vermeer: The Complete Works (Abrams, £14.95)

APPARENTLY no other volume collects all of Vermeer's known works. I'm prepared to believe it, and it does beat schlepping all the way round the world to see them (they're large reproductions, too: the pages are almost A3 size). Unfortunately Arthur K Wheelock Jr, a curator at the Washington National Gallery, would seem to have been instructed to write an accompanying text of almost laughable banality. "In this radiant painting a young woman gazes happily into the eyes of a red-cloaked soldier sitting across from her." Yes, I can see that, get on with it.

The Missionary and the Libertine: Love and War in East and West, by Ian Buruma (Faber, £8.99)

THIS is one of the best books about the East, and its troubled and contrary relationship with the West, that you will ever read. (It is instructive to learn that the Japanese think as disgracefully of us as we do of them.) Buruma knows his stuff and writes superbly.

That Yellow Bastard, by Frank Miller (Titan, £10.99)

I CAN still hardly bring myself to use the term "graphic novel" but "comic book" is quite the wrong way to describe this incredibly grim story about a cop who rescues an 11-year-old girl from the clutches of a maniac, who also happens to be the son of a powerful politician. No one draws evil as well and as powerfully as Miller, but you really do feel wretched after reading it.

According to Paul

Julie Burchill

Paul McCartney:
Many Years From Now
by Barry Miles
Secker & Warburg 704pp £17.99

TO KNOW-NOTHING rockists, there can only ever be two interesting things about Paul McCartney — and they answer to the names "John" and "Linda". In the days when everyone had a favourite Beatle instead of a favourite Spice Girl, the thinking fan's Beatle was invariably John. And although John Beatle was long ago proved to be a morally incontinent sexist and racist headcase who when not beating up his wife was purchasing whole apartments in the Dakota building just to keep said wife's fur coat collection at the correct temperature ("Imagine! No possessions!"), the myth of his surly saintliness persists even unto his dumbed-down disciples Oasis.

But to girls — who understand pop at a gut level, as opposed to boys, who understand it with their groins and brains in equal parts, both equally unreliable — Paul was always Best Beatle. He was handsome, winsome and ruthless; he was more girlish than the others, which made him the most sexy and subversive. You could just tell that Lennon was an unreconstructed sexist, racist slob by the ugly way he yowled and sneered — but when Paul and George put their silky brunette bands together over one microphone and went "ooooooo!", it was every girl for herself.

The Beatles broke up when I was 10. I remember my parents' grim faces as we listened to the radio; the Abdication must have been a lot like that. "It was that Yoko." "It was the drugs." But most of all "It was that Linda. Why didn't he marry that lovely Jane Asher?" Linda, along with Yoko Ono and Wallis Simpson, is one of the great sexual sphinxes of the 20th century, baffling Britain and beyond with her prairie-plain face and penny loafers. She was not a bird or a babe; she was a buddy, which — looking back — spoke of McCartney's integrity, the same integrity which would see him settle in Sussex, send his kiddies to the local comp and pay all his taxes.

Sadly, his singularly unembarrassing personal conduct has been somewhat cancelled out by his long-standing habit of writing some of the most excruciating songs known to man — from Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da (about a marriage) through Mary Had A Little Lamb (about a lamb) and Martha My Dear (about a dog) to the tragic climax of Silly Love Songs (self-explanatory): though, interestingly, nothing as bad as Imagine. Nevertheless, McCartney's has always given the impression of being a talent hell-bent on cuddling itself to death.

This book seeks to redress the balance and inject some gravitas into the old giggler's image. It's immediately evident on the jacket, where a moody black and white shot shows him looking solemn and making a church with his hands, for all the world like a Labour elder statesman who never quite made it and will now proceed to tell us over the space of half a million words exactly where we went wrong.

It's appropriate that McCartney is now actually a Sir, because this book bends the knee in no uncertain terms: think of Albert Goldman's biography of John Lennon and then think of the opposite. You almost expect to see a little gold coat of arms and the words "By appointment to his royal highness Lord McCartney of Penny Lane at the top of the elegant black front cover.

Barry Miles has known McCartney well for more than 30 years, and judging by the size of this book every single one of their conversations during that time has been recorded and set down in stone — though it claims modestly only to have come to fruition after "hours of exclusive interviews undertaken over a period of five years".

The project does indeed fairly scream Quality, so it is quite a delicious shock to see on the press handout a quote which could have come straight out of one of Craig Brown's brilliant Private Eye diaries: "Along the way I'd like to register the fact that John was great, he was absolutely wonderful and I did love him, lest it be seen that I'm trying now to do my own kind of revisionism. He was fabulous, really, and all I'm saying is that I have my side of the affair as well, which sometimes gets ignored, hence my agreeing to be part of this book."

Boys, boys!

Well, it's not a disappointment. The bitching just gets better and better, and Paul and Barry make a right pair. Barry: "With John interested only in Yoko and his own music . . . Paul had inevitably taken charge of the album." "It was virtually impossible for the cameras to get a shot of the four of them without Yoko. It was hardly an unreasonable request when they asked John if she could be less intrusive . . . but John was so besotted that he didn't see it that way, he couldn't see that he was breaking up the group." "John was in need of all the encouragement and flattery he could get."

Paul: "One of the things most people don't know about John is that a lot of his genius was a cover-up for his paranoia." "John was in love with Yoko and he was no longer in love with the rest of us." "When John did How Do You Sleep?, I didn't want to get into a slanging match. And I'm so glad now, particularly after his death, that I don't have that on my conscience."

But, bitching apart, there's precious little fun to be had here. Mr Miles is obviously taking his career as a stenographer far too seriously to worry about anything so high-falutin as a writing style, and the prose fairly clunks along. They say that God is in the details, but if so there's too much God here; too many breathless recollections along the lines of "Then George Martin and his team had to synchronise it with their original four-track master since they did not have an eight-track machine. The engineer Ken Townshend lashed up a method of starting all the tape machines simultaneously using a 50-hertz signal, but even then the synchronisation wasn't quite perfect and on the final mix the orchestra can just be heard going in and out of time." Whew!

Paradoxically, there's too little about the actual songs and what inspired them: amazingly, McCartney's best song, the gorgeous Maybe I'm Amazed is not mentioned once.

The final impression, for all the lush packaging and pedigree, is one of two old biddies gossiping over a garden fence about an absent third. It may be true that when it came to Silly Love Songs, Sir Paul has inflicted more than his due share upon the world. Nevertheless, you can't help feeling that his capricious and often surprising talent deserves some greater chronicler than a mere secretary bird, no matter how willing the ear or flexible the knee.

Listening to me . . . Paul McCartney, through Linda's eyes

Little Miss Know-it-all

Linda Grant

She's Leaving Home
by Edwina Currie
Little Brown 438pp £16.99

IN THE late eighties I was asked to approach Edwina Currie MP to conduct an interview for Good Housekeeping. I wrote to her mentioning that I grew up in the same Jewish suburb of Liverpool as Edwina Cohen (as was) did, though five or six years behind her, just starting secondary school when she was in the sixth form.

Her publicist, Barbara Kelly, rang me. A cigarette-stained Canadian voice said that Edwina would be delighted to meet me. We sorted out a date. Finally, Kelly said, "And her fee for this will be £2,000." I said, "I don't do chequebook journalism," and the matter ended there. "What a bitch," my mother said, when I told her.

Now Currie has written an autobiographical novel about her upbringing. It is the story of Helen Majinsky, growing up in Liverpool in the early 1960s. Helen lives in Childwall, a Jewish suburb. Her father, a tailor (Mr Cohen's job, too), and her housewife mother are terrified that their clever daughter will go away to university and reject for ever the insular world of immigrant Jews in which a woman's place is at the heart of the family. At the end of the book, Helen is accepted at Cambridge in the teeth of the most violent family hostility.

Buried in this long book is rather a good and serious one. Currie is marvellous at conveying how very restricted the lives of even clever girls were back then, when even the aspiration for a better, different life was dazzlingly bold and bohemian.

The problem is that Currie gets bogged down in detailed accounts of the workings of the Jewish community which are oddly unevocative of what they describe. Why are they there? Because, I think, such detail and length is a statutory aspect of the Airport Novel, the only kind that makes big money. There's no cash in brief literary fiction, which this could be if it tried harder.

The real problem, though, lies at the centre of the book, in its heroine, a right little know-it-all, delivering stodgily didactic lectures on the virtues of Harold Macmillan and the pros and cons of entry into the Common Market. She talks like a politician throughout. We all think, at that age, that we are always right, but you wonder what distance and maturity Currie has from her own creation. At the end of the book Helen tells her father he is just as bad as the Nazis in demanding that she only marry someone of the same race.

I probably said the same thing myself, but it seems cruel and callow now. For Helen, though, it is her triumphant catharsis and denouement, just before Cambridge acceptance and flight to a better world from these sad, bigoted old Jews she grew up amongst. A coming of age novel at 50 is a graceless thing.

A voyage into memory

Maya Jaggi

Feeding the Ghosts
by Fred D'Aguiar
Chatto 230pp £14.99

SICK slaves in the Middle Passage were frequently thrown overboard with the dead since they would fetch more in insurance as "goods lost at sea" than at the auction block. In 1783, as the Abolitionist lobby gained ground, a scandal broke around the slave ship Zong, the crew of which had ditched 132 "livestock" in the Atlantic.

From this chilling scrap of history Fred D'Aguiar has fashioned a rich and compelling novel, rescuing a fictional sole survivor from the Zong murders as the half-drowned conscience of a society. As the captain orders his mutinous crew to dispose of the "sick stock", mission-educated Mintah clambers back on board to foment revolt. Calling to First Mate Kelsal, whom she had nursed after a shipwreck, the literate, baptised African woman is the haunting reminder of a shared humanity that he strives to gag, rape, bludgeon and submerge.

As the scene shifts from high seas to courtroom for a hearing provoked by thrifty insurers, the nightmare emerges from different viewpoints: the captain clutching his ledger "as if it was filled with gold"; the judge comically distracted by the prospect of cured pheasant; the slow-witted cook's mate Simon, who loves and hides Mintah and presents her diary to the court; and Mintah looking back after Emancipation 50 years on.

The captain's orders are viewed as an affront not to humanity but to the sound management of stock, the safeguarding of profit. It is only the simpleton Simon who is immune to this sophistry. Beaten and abused, kept from education like other poor whites and slaves, he keeps faith with Mintah.

D'Aguiar began as a poet, and his third novel has both suspense and poetic resonance. The fatal voyage is powerfully imagined, using muscular, elemental imagery of sea, wind, salt, wood, rope, broken bodies and a bloodied wake.

Mintah's diary hints at how slave accounts, such as 18th century best-sellers by Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho, fuelled the push for Abolition. Feeding The Ghosts is partly about the claims made on our memory by nameless other lives that went unrecorded — the sea's "grey vault" housing no monuments, as the epigraph from Derek Walcott says. As with the legends around Mintah, it is in Caribbean and African-American folklore that rebels are remembered.

This novel is a powerful addition to a growing genre in British fiction. Alongside work by Caryl Phillips, David Dabydeen and Barry Unsworth, it probes the triangular trade's brutal mechanics through individual hearts and minds — on deck and in the hold.

Yet D'Aguiar's novel seems less a polemical answering-back than a meditation on a shared legacy — "unending", like the Zong's voyage.

ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

A tide in the affairs of birds

Mark Cocker

AT HOLKHAM in north Norfolk there was no breeze and the North Sea was dead calm, yet the incoming tide still devoured vast expanses of beach at a remarkable pace. Each moon-driven surge exploited even the slightest camber in the sand flats, the waters pushing in, then cutting behind any higher, more resistant ridge of shingle until it was completely cut off

These momentary islets at the tide-edge were perfect feeding areas for a group of sanderlings, the most easily recognised and characterful of a difficult bird group known generically as sandpipers. In summer, sanderlings are richly chequered with russet, chestnut and black. In winter they are reduced to a ghostly white and grey. But at all times their most striking feature is their frenetic movement.

This behaviour is partly dictated by the birds' dietary preference, which is for the invertebrates found just below the beach surface and which are most easily detected as the tide first washes over. Sanderlings must dash in between successive waves, probe briefly in the exposed substrate, then dash out again to avoid being soaked. The birds I watched were performing exactly this routine.

But as the rising waters nibbled away at one islet it was evident that they had found a rich food source and they worked feverishly to exploit it before it was lost altogether. Soon there was no dry sand visible, but the sanderlings still scuttled among the shallows, their heads bobbing up and down like clockwork toys.

At one point a higher wavelet lifted two birds clear off, but they were undeterred and scampered in again to probe the backwash. This continued until finally the water rose above their bellies and they conceded defeat, only to fly inland a little to a new frontier of sea and sand.

It was a highly entertaining performance, the flock's mechanical quickstep and nervous intensity reminding me of nothing more strongly than the antics of the Keystone Cops of silent movie fame. But this note of comedy disguises a more serious, often epic story that underlies a sanderling's presence on Holkham beach.

For the bird's breeding cycle is an enlarged version of their opportunistic feeding action, the species exploiting the extraordinary — but highly transient — bloom of life in the high Arctic. As late as the end of May I have seen many hundreds of sanderlings gathered on this very Norfolk beach before they set off for the most northerly land on Earth.

Since the breeding area is all beyond the 5°C July isotherm, the pack-ice and snow may not melt until June and can return again by August. Sanderlings must be able, therefore, to breed, lay and incubate their eggs and rear their young to fledgling within six weeks.

Then they begin a return journey, birds from Greenland sometimes travelling as far south as Tierra del Fuego in South America, while some Siberian populations move down through Southeast Asia to winter on the Pacific coast of Australia.

By mid to late summer birds from both breeding locations also arrive in Britain, where some remain for more than six months.

In fact, at least half of all the sanderlings wintering in western Europe can be found on British beaches such as Holkham. But others only stop to refuel before continuing south as far as the African Cape. Here they can almost double in weight before doing the journey in reverse.

It is therefore possible that the birds I was watching were party to an annual Siberia/South Africa odyssey of more than 35,000km, which seems a rather impressive performance for a creature that weighs no more than 100 grams.

Chess Leonard Barden

THE chess world's three junior talents, who are talked of as potential successors to Garry Kasparov, have had mixed fortunes lately. Britain's Luke McShane, aged 13, has preferred steady improvement this summer rather than attempting to break Etienne Bacrot of France's record as the youngest grandmaster. But McShane gained valuable Fide rating points at Lippstadt, Germany, and in the Smith & Williamson British Championship at Hove.

In contrast, Ruslan Ponomariov, with a record 2,555 points for age 13, made a daring attempt in July to snatch Bacrot's record. The Ukrainian, by far the youngest player in the under-20 world championship that offers an automatic GM title for the winner, shared the lead with 6/8 five rounds from the end.

Then disaster struck. The inexperienced Ponomariev repeated a dubious Sicilian that he had already played previously, and fell for a devastating reply. Macieja v Ponomariev was effectively over just two moves after leaving the book:

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6?! 6 Nxc6 bxc6 7 e5 Ng8 8 Bc4 Bg7 9 Bf4 Qa5 10 Qf3 f6? (Magem v Ponomariov, Pamplona 1997, went Bxe5 11 Bxf7+) 11 e6 d5 12 Bb5! (threats Bxe6+ or Qxd5) cxb5 13 Qxd5 Qb6 14 Qxa8. White won easily, and a demoralised Ponomariov collapsed to 7/13.

Bacrot looks the boy to beat. Following last year's match where the teenager crushed the former world champion Smyslov 5-1, he challenged the formidable Viktor Korchnoi, aged 66. Korchnoi won 4-2, but Bacrot was far from outclassed. This game was the best of the match.

Bacrot v Korchnoi

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 c5 5 cxd5 Nxd5 6 e4 Nxc3 7 bxc3 cxd4 8 cxd4 Nc6 9 Bc4 b5 One suggested approach to playing prodigies is to choose moves that were in fashion before they were born, so Korchnoi repeats a Fischer idea from the famous match against Spassky.

10 Be2! Spassky played 10 Bd3 not 10 Bxb5? Qa5+. Bb4+ 11 Bd2 Bxd2+ 12 Qxd2 Rb8 13 d5 exd5 14 exd5 Ne7 15 d6 Nf5 16 Rd1 0-0 Not Rb6? 17 Bxb5+!

17 d7 Bb7 18 0-0 Qf6 19 Qf4 a6 20 g4 Bxf3 21 Bxf3 Nh4 22 Qxf6 gxf6 23 Be4 Rfd8 24 Rd6 a5 Both sides aimed for this position, where Korchnoi hopes to round up the d7 pawn by Kf8-e7 and Ng6-f8. 25 f4 Ng6 26 h4 Now if Nxh4 27 f5 traps the knight, while if Kf8 27 h5 Ke7 28 Rfd1 Nf8 29 h6 favours white.

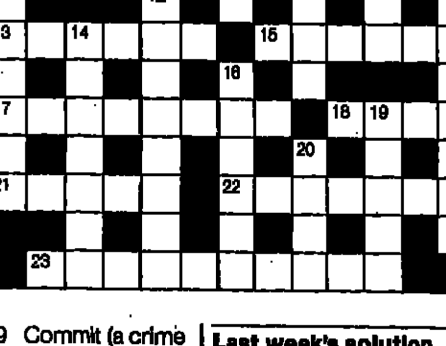
The rest is impressive play by Bacrot. Kg7 27 h5 Nf8 28 h6+ Kxh6 29 g5+ Kg7 30 gxf6+ Kg8 31 Bc6 Ne6 32 f5 Nc7 33 Rd3 Rb6 34 Rc1 Na6 35 Re3 Rf8 36 Re8 Rb8 37 Bxb5 Resigns White wins by Rcc8.

No 2494

Known as the Jap Trick, this puzzle was inspired by the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. The white pawns are kamikaze attackers, while Black's are battleships from the Eastern Fleet. I've seen far better chess images, but can you work out what happens with White to play?

No 2493: 1 Kc5 c1Q 2 Nc4+ and mate by 3 Ra3 or 3 Ra1.

Quick crossword no. 388



Across

1 Smuggled goods (10)
7 Irreverent (7)
8 Group of trees etc (5)
10 Make weary (4)
11 Nomad (from eg Bolton?) (8)
13 Consequence (6)
15 Sheepdog (6)
17 Denied or disputed (8)
18 Incitement or branch (4)
21 Draw — find (5)
22 Bright red (7)
23 Talkative person (10)

Down

1 Frolic (for sauce!) (5)
2 Cranny (4)
3 Scamp (6)
4 Illicit or tradesman's entrance (4,4)
5 Not taking sides (7)
6 Hereditary entitlement (10)
9 Commit (a crime etc) (10)
12 Leaflet — extra canvas for tent (8)
14 Green vegetable (7)
16 Handkerchief substitute (6)
19 Flower (sounds like sheep!) (5)
20 Doorpost (4)

Last week's solution

C	L	A	P	H	A	M		A		E		V
O		P		O		A	R	R	A	N	G	E
P	Y	R	A	M	I	D		C		C		R
R		I		E		C	A	H	O	O	T	S
A	T	L	A	S		A		B		R		U
	H			E	M	P	T	I	N	E	S	S
	O			C				S			A	
Q	U	E	E	R	F	I	S	H			N	
U		M		E		N		O	U	T	D	O
O	R	B	I	T	A	L		P		H		D
R		O		A		A	G	R	O	U	N	D
U	N	S	C	R	E	W		I		M		L
M		S		Y		S	I	C	K	B	A	Y

Bridge Zia Mahmood

MICHAEL COURTNEY, known to the inmates of TGR's as "Mad Dog", is an Australian with a wonderful sense of humour and a massive appetite for beer. Often referred to as "Mr 4NT" for his continual abuse of the Blackwood convention, he's the biggest overbidder in the universe, but he can afford to be, for he is an excellent card player.

In the previous Chicago, Courtney had doubled me in a slam that had made — but now he was my partner, and I knew that I would have to tread carefully. My first hand was a joy:

♠AKJ965 ♥None ♦7 ♣AQJ853

I opened with an Acol two spades. My left-hand opponent put a damper on proceedings by overcalling with 2NT to show the minors, so my club suit was unlikely to provide many tricks. Courtney bid three hearts, and my right-hand opponent joined in with four diamonds. The signs were bad, but there was little I could do other than bid four spades. Courtney, of course, bid the inevitable 4NT. What call would you make at this point?

I had two aces, so it would have been normal to bid five hearts. But I was starting to hate the whole business, so I decided that five diamonds was more prudent. If Mad Dog could bid a slam facing only one ace, I ought to be able to make it with two — but if I showed my actual holding, who knew to what heights we might soar?

My bid of five diamonds elicited six spades from Courtney, and a prompt double from my right-hand opponent! Well, I had shown one ace when I had two, and besides, if my opponent was doubling on the basis of a trick in hearts, I could cope with that easily. I knew that it was wrong to assume that we could make anything Courtney bid, but this was more than flesh and blood could stand.

"Redouble!" I exclaimed, concluding a dramatic auction (above right). West led the ace of diamonds, on which East played the two. West switched accurately to a club, and East ruffed it! One down.

"Why did you bid six spades when you thought we were missing two aces?" I asked Mad Dog.

"Six?" he replied. "I nearly bid seven! Anyway, don't go blaming me. It was your fault."

North
♠Q4
♥AK98743
♦654
♣K

West
♠8
♥5
♦AK983
♣1097642

East
♠1073[illegible]
♥QJ10[illegible]
♦QJ[illegible]
♣None

South
♠AKJ965
♥None
♦7
♣AQJ853

South Zia	West	North Courtney	East
2♠	2NT	3♥	4♦
4♠	Pass	4NT	Double
5♦	Pass	6♠	Double
Red'ble	Pass	Pass	Pass

"How could it be my fault?" "If you'd just bid five hearts to show your two aces," he explained, "instead of hiding one like a chicken, West would never have found this defence. He'd have tried to cash a second diamond, and you'd have made the slam. He played a club because, after your cowardly Blackwood response, he placed his partner with the ace"

Tennis CA Trophy

A final too far for Rusedski

THE shadow of Goran Ivanisevic is one of the longest in tennis and one that Greg Rusedski, for all his success, has been singularly unable to shake off this year, *writes Stephen Bierley in Vienna.* He lost to the gangling Croatian in the Zagreb final in February, again in the semi-finals at Queen's, and last Sunday — the most galling of all, after leading by two sets — in the final of the CA Trophy here, 3-6, 6-7, 7-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Rusedski had 11 opportunities to break Ivanisevic in the third set, yet just could not nail him. The Croatian had been warned for an audible obscenity in the second set and, when he flung his racket down during a crucial stage of the third, Rusedski believed he should have been awarded the game to lead 5-3.

As it was, Ivanisevic saved five break points in this one game alone and Rusedski unfortunately, if understandably, let it get the better of him. Ivanisevic continued to throw his racket about but the German umpire Rudi Berger did not warn him again, despite further protests from Rusedski.

The Austrian crowd was on Ivanisevic's side throughout and in hindsight the British No 1 and world No 4 may regret his audible complaints, for they appeared to concentrate Ivanisevic's mind, always the most fragile part of his make-up, whereas Rusedski's mental control, so implacable during the past two months, slipped sharply and he, too, was warned for belting a ball into the crowd.

But this lapse was surely down to sheer fatigue as much as anything. Since he lost the final of the US Open to Australia's Pat Rafter, the Briton's life has been one huge whirl of activity, both on and off the court.

His new coach Tony Pickard knew that the fuel had all but run out and his man was running on vapour, but between them they nearly engineered another famous victory. Just by getting to the final, his second within eight days after winning in Basel, Rusedski moved another important step closer to his aim of reaching the ATP World Championships in Hanover next month, a tournament limited to the eight top-ranked players in the world as of November 10.

Last Saturday Rusedski had thoroughly underlined his position as the top player in Britain with a 6-4, 6-4 win over his arch-rival Tim Henman. Against Ivanisevic he appeared unstoppable after winning the second-set tie-break 7-4.

Ivanisevic previously held a 4-0 advantage over Rusedski in these tense shoot-outs, including an epic 20-18 win at Queen's this summer, but the Croat has had a miserable four months and nearly lost to Holland's Richard Krajicek in the semi-finals, saving four match points. However, he has played much more tennis recently and this was crucial once the tide began to turn his way.

Motor Racing Japanese Grand Prix

All set for final showdown

Alan Henry in Suzuka

PATRICK HEAD fears that history may repeat itself as Michael Schumacher and Jacques Villeneuve go into the final race of the season, the European Grand Prix at Jerez later this month, each needing to beat the other — or perhaps prevent him from finishing — to win the world championship.

In the final race of 1994 Schumacher bumped Damon Hill off the track at Adelaide. Head, the Williams team's technical director, said last Sunday: "The man who goes into the last race in the lead is in a position where he can, as we've seen in a number of years previously, be very aggressive with the person behind.

"I view what happened to Damon in 1994 as the deliberate removal of a competitor. The man with less points will have to be very careful if he is challenging for the lead."

Schumacher has always denied that he acted deliberately, pointing out that his Benetton had hit a wall and saying he was unable to control it as it slewed across the track into Hill's Williams. The accident handed the German driver his first world title.

Head was speaking after Schumacher's Ferrari victory in the Japanese Grand Prix here moved the German to within a point of Villeneuve, the Williams driver, with only one race remaining. Indeed, it may be Schumacher who holds the one-point lead going into the last race. Villeneuve was racing under appeal after initially being excluded for failing to slow for a yellow warning flag during free practice. It was his fourth such offence this season, activating a one-race suspended ban imposed at last month's Italian Grand Prix.

Head believes that Villeneuve will lose the two points he gained in the race when the team's appeal is heard by the FIA. That would mean him going to Jerez one point behind Schumacher, just as Hill did three years ago.

Head remained confident, though. "If we can get this situation behind us — Jacques being banned and the appeal — we should be perfectly capable of beating Michael, and that's what we need to do there in Jerez," he said.

Schumacher's victory was a triumph of Ferrari team tactics, with the No 2 driver Eddie Irvine collaborating perfectly to ensure Villeneuve was subjected to maximum aggravation and inconvenience.

Villeneuve finished in fifth place — behind Schumacher, his own team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen, Irvine and Mika Hakkinen of Finland.

Schumacher, who showed his delight by jumping for joy on the podium, said: "This is one of the most satisfying wins of my career."

Schumacher: serious challenge

But he was critical of Villeneuve's slowing tactics at the first corner. "It could have been very dangerous," he claimed. "Jacques did not want me to score any points and tried to make life difficult for me."

However, Frentzen defended his team-mate, saying: "Many people said before the race that Jacques would push Michael off, but that's not his way."

● The French Grand Prix has been omitted from next year's Formula One calendar, announced in Paris by the International Automobile Federation, after a dispute over local television rights. French officials are hoping that the dispute, which has created a five-week gap between the Canadian and British GPs, will be resolved soon.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Hamed hits the high notes on home ground

LOCAL HERO Naseem Hamed retained his World Boxing Organisation featherweight crown with a seventh-round stoppage against his Puerto Rican opponent, Jose Badilla, in Sheffield. Hamed was on top from the start and finished the eighth defence of his title without a mark on him.

On the same bill was Chris Eubank, whose bid to recapture the vacant WBO super-middleweight title ended in failure when he was beaten on points by Joe Calzaghe. The young Welshman had the former champion in all sorts of trouble in the early rounds, dumping him on the canvas with a stinging punch just 30 seconds into the fight. But Eubank clawed his way back into the contest. However, he was unable to stop Calzaghe finishing well ahead of him on points.

Carl Wright, another fighter on the same bill, underwent emergency neurosurgery after losing his British light-welterweight title fight to the Ulsterman Mark Winters on points. The Liverpool boxer was later placed on a life-support machine.

BRITISH cyclist Chris Boardman's disappointing season ended with a consolation prize when he won the bronze medal in the world time-trial championship over 27 miles in the Basque country resort of San Sebastian.

Boardman picked up speed down the final hill to pip Tony Rominger to the final medal place by nearly four seconds. Laurent Jalabert of France claimed the gold in a time of 52:01.19sec with Sergei Gontchar of the Ukraine in second place. The Briton, nursing a rib injury, said: "I am glad I was respectable and could do a professional job under the circumstances."

JOHN MERRICKS, winner of the 470 dinghy silver medallist at the last Olympics, was killed when the car in which he was a passenger went out of control and crashed in Italy. He was 26. Merricks's long-time sailing partner, Ian Walker, was with him at the time of the accident but escaped with minor injuries, as did the rest of those in the vehicle.

Merricks was leading the Melges 24 European championship when he died and, as a mark of respect, racing was stopped and the championship awarded to him posthumously.

Merricks: killed in crash

AZHAR MAHMOOD helped set two records as he and last man Mushtaq Ahmed guided Pakistan to 456 all out in the first Test against South Africa in Rawalpindi. Mahmood's unbeaten 128, following 115 from Ali Naqvi earlier, represented the first time two debutants have scored centuries in the same innings of a Test.

In addition, his stand of 151 with Ahmed was the joint highest last wicket partnership in Test history, equalling a stand set by New Zealand against Pakistan in 1972. Pakistan's previous best last wicket stand was 133 against West Indies. The Rawalpindi Test, in which South Africa replied with 403, petered out in a draw.

CARL HOOPER, the West Indies all-rounder currently preparing for a Test series in Pakistan, will return to Kent as their overseas player next season, replacing the Zimbabwe leg-spinner Paul Strang.

URUGUAY, twice World Cup winners, exited the current competition despite holding Argentina to a 0-0 draw in Buenos Aires. Paraguay, Argentina and Colombia are already through in the South American zone.

THIRD Division Swansea City have sacked their player-manager Jan Molby and his assistant Billy Ayre after a poor start to the season. Micky Adams, jettisoned at Fulham, succeeded Molby, who had been in the job 18 months.

Meanwhile Newcastle's manager Kenny Dalglish has signed the Australia Under-21 international striker Carlos Gonzales from Sydney Olympic on a two-year contract.

For detailed coverage of English football on the Internet, see: http://www.football.guardian.co.uk

Golf World Match Play

Singh stops Els at last

David Davies at Wentworth

FINALLY, but only in the final, and then on the final green, Ernie Els knew defeat. After three successive triumphs involving 11 successive winning matches, he was denied a fourth Toyota World Match Play championship when he lost to Vijay Singh by one hole here last Sunday.

In what was far from a classic final, Els was two under par for the 36 holes and Singh three under. Although the closing stages were close they were not compelling. The two men played the last six holes without a birdie between them as the match meandered to a curiously low-key finish.

"If I'd played well and he'd beaten me by playing great, that would've been different," admitted a clearly weary and somewhat depressed Els, "but that was not my best golf at all. It was not at all like I've played for the last three years. I tried very hard to hang in there but I guess it had to stop some time."

Singh, too, was aware that it had been an anticlimactic final. "In matchplay all you have to do is play better than your opponent, which I did," the Fijian said defensively. "The figures might not look great but it was quite difficult out there, with the course playing long and the wind swirling in the trees."

That may be true, but the conditions were certainly easier than when Singh went round in [illegible] against Brad Faxon or when Els was 11 under in beating Ian Woosnam in the semi-finals. It was, in short, just one of those days.

Singh becomes one of only two men — Corey Pavin is the other — to win from an unseeded position and thus have to play four rounds of 36 holes. Now based in Florida, he has been working with a personal fitness trainer and claimed not to be tired at the conclusion of play, though there is a certain buoyancy about the cheque for $275,000 that goes to the winner nowadays.

Singh's triumph also adds weight to the argument that he is one of the world's best players never to have won a major championship. Colin Montgomerie and Phil Mickelson are the leading candidates in this category, but the languid Singh is often as impressive as either of them.

"The Wentworth victory is a personal achievement," he said. "I'd read about Gary Player and Hale Irwin winning here and now I've not just played in it, I've won it. Majors are the toughest of tournaments to win, but I have time and I have a long way to go before I give up."

Football results

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE:
Division One: Birmingham 1, Wolves 0; Reading 3, Crewe 3, Stockport 3, Oxford 2; Stoke 2, Port Vale 1; Swindon 3, Bury 1.

Division Two: Burnley 3, Carlisle 1; Chesterfld 2, Wigan 3; Fulham 1, Blackpool 0; Gillingham 1, Wycombe 0; Grimsby 1, Northmptn 0; Luton 3, Plymouth 0; Millwall 2, Oldham 1; Preston 0, Bournemth 1; Southend 0, Bristol City 2; Walsall 3, Wrexham 0; York 3, Brentford 1.

Division Three: Chester 2, Brighton 0; Doncaster 2, Hartlepool 2; Exeter 1, Swansea 0; Hull 3, Scarboro 0; Leyton O 1, Rotherham 1; Lincoln 1, Torquay 1; Mansfield 3, Cambridge 2; Notts Co 1, Macclesfld 1; Peterboro 3, Colchester 2; Rochdale 5, Darlington 0; Shrewsbry 2, Barnet 0.

BELLS SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Third Division: Ross Co 2, Queens Pk 1.